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# THE ART OF KATHAKALI



GAJASUR VADHAM

(A ballet by Sri Uday Shankar employing Kathakali technique with costumes designed by him.)

[ *Courtesy* : Uday Shankar, Indian Culture Centre ]

# The Art of Kathakali

*By*

GAYANACHARYA AVINASH C. PANDEYA

*With an Introduction by*

HIS HIGHNESS MAHARANA SHREE VIJAYADEVJI  
RANA, MAHARAJA SAHEB OF DHARAMPUR  
STATE

*Foreword by*

GOPI NATH  
PALACE DANCER (TRAVANCORE STATE)

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**TO**  
**MY MOTHER**





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## FOREWORD

In making a critical study of the art and dance of Kathakali, the ancient folk dance-drama of Kerala, Gayanacharya Avinash C. Pandeya has produced this comprehensive book of an unparalleled nature. I feel no less pleasure than great honour that I am invited to express a few words on it.

So far none has dealt with this subject (in any language) so elaborately and so systematically, as this young authority on Indian music and dancing has. He has presented the entire technical subtlety in a lucid style making it to rank as the first book on Kathakali literature, dance and art. Its authenticity as the first to-day and the first to-morrow shall ever guide all dancers, students, commentators and contemporaries of all ages.

The book deals with the origin of Kathakali, its art and dance, *rasas* and costume and make-up, and gestural code; and makes a wide study on the origin of *Mudras*—their permutation and com-

bination. The interesting chapter on its mime—make-up and costume—vividly reinforces the intricacy and artistical development which this *kala* gained within a short evolutionary period of a little over 200 years.

The writer has taken great pains in tracing out those neglected pieces of this art which were hitherto unknown and unmined. While dealing with hand poses in use in Kathakali, Gayanacharya has tabulated the connotation of groups of ideas which each *mudra* represents. It will help considerably all dancers to remember various expressions expressable by them.

Kathakali is “an interpretative dance-drama to the accompaniment of music.” The highly specialised form of pantomimic representation makes this art to depict the actual life of our gods and people.

While tracing the origin of Kathakali, the author has made an interesting survey of those human factors which can contribute in the evolution of dance. Guided by regional effects, habit, custom, and tradition, Gayanacharya believes that Kathakali has taken its birth to connote “poetry

in their (dancers) figures.” The wide appeal of sentiments and emotions helps the Kathakali actor to depict an object or a thought in a lively and realistic colour. The author has been successful in giving the basis and importance of the use of various colours in Kathakali make-ups. The unique feature of the book lies in the discussion and analysis of “Kathakali Dance Exercises” and “*Talas* Used In Kathakali”. Its practical utility has been enriched and enhanced by these.

The work presents a scholarly exposition of every art Kathakali and is an invaluable companion with every one interested in matters Kathakali. It is the first authoritative work in my opinion.

THE TRAVANCORE SCHOOL OF  
KERALA DANCING  
TRIVANDRUM  
*February, 1943*

GOPINATH  
*Palace Dancer*



## PREFACE

It has always been difficult for man to realise that his life is all art. Man is the measure of all things, of those which exist, and of those which have no existence. It is here that man visualises the Infinite in the process of the self-expression through the Beauty of Nature—the Aesthetic Emotion. He, thus, develops a nature and makes it dance in an ecstatic gait to exhibit the Spiritual Life in the Physical manifestation of the Life Eternal.

Love is reality as experienced by the lover, truth is reality as the philosopher experiences, and so is beauty “reality” through the artist’s angle of vision: and are not these the three phases of the Absolute? The Indian philosopher firmly believes that the absolute Beauty (*rasa*, aesthetic emotion and sentiment) exists in the same manner as the votary conceives the existence of the absolute Goddess and the absolute Truth. These feelings of Love, Truth and Beauty inflame the heart of



man; he makes gestures, pantomimic in their form but powerful in their expression of thought. It is the "dance"—the dance of life—the eternal dance—the dance that leads life to worship God, to attain salvation.

*Unmai Vilakkam* v. 32-37-39, mention :—

"The Supreme Intelligence dances in the soul...for the purpose of removing our sins. By these means, our Father scatters the darkness of illusion (*maya*), burns the thread of causality (*Karma*), stamps down evil (*mala*, *anava*, *avidya*), showers Grace, and lovingly plunges the Soul in the Ocean of Bliss (*ananda*). They never see rebirths, who behold this mystic dance."

The cosmic dance of Shiva is the manifestation of man's Rhythmic Life—"of His Rhythmic Play as the Source of all Movement within the Cosmos"—which is Released of all Illusions. This Life is the Centre of Universe, *i.e.*, God within the Heart.

Kathakali makes a marvellous survey of the Absolute through the physical manifestation of aesthetics. It is an art of feeling expressed through

emotions, gestures and *mudras* (hand poses). It is here that this art excels all other dance arts in India, except the *Bharatha Natya* to which it owes its existence.

The revival of dancing in India during recent years, though begun in a much sophisticated manner, was due to some professionalists who were struggling for their existence. Frequent visits of Western dancers, like, Ragini, La Marie, Anna Pavalova, etc., induced young educated Indian men and women, who had an innate desire or instinct to learn this art, to exploit the dormant culture of their nation and to awaken their latent faculties for the ultimate promotion of their well-being. Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal, Natraj Vashi, Rukmini and Sadhana Bose are among the brilliant exponents of the ancient schools of dancing. Gopi Nath, the Palace Dancer of Travancore, is the "real" scholar of the art of Kathakali, the mimetic folk dance of Malabar. It is the genius of Uday Shankar that he has introduced originality in his dances: Mahakavi Vallathol equally stands in originality in Kathakali.

The present work is the first attempt in English to elucidate the subtleties of the Kathakali dance-drama. So far none has made a comprehensive survey of its various aspects. All the available material on this subject is insufficient to give an authoritative interpretation of its elaborate technique. One has to go deep in the art of the actor while staging some play.

The growth of this dance, with a full investigation of its historical background of evolution and also the development in the formation and usage of hand poses, has been discussed at length. The costume and make-up have a different adaptation at different occasions. Special attention has been given to the make-up of characters, because the Kathakali especially draws its magnificence from it. Aesthetic emotions and sentiments, as an essential accessory of the dance, have been fully discussed. Other useful information, like, the Kathakali stage, musical instruments, etc., are given in Appendices.

The material for this work has been drawn mostly from palm-leaf manuscripts kept in His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore Palace Library, Department of Archaeology (Travancore)

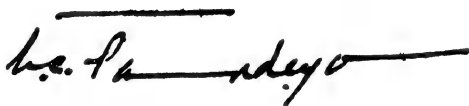
publications and other contemporary writings. My own experience in this art has polished the entire theme.

In preparing this book I am benefited considerably by several persons to whom I am highly indebted. In particular, my revered friend, Mr. R. V. Poduval, B.A., Director of Archaeology (Travancore), helped me a lot by lending me some of his departmental manuscripts and publications. My Personal Assistant, Mr. Abdul Rahman Ghaznavi, laboured much in collecting matter for this work, and I am beholden to him for this. I am obliged to my teacher, Dr. D. Pant, B. Com., Ph.D. (T.C.D.) of the University of Lucknow, for reading the original MS. I am thankful to my younger brothers, Messrs. Santosh Chandra Pandeya and Satish Chandra Pandeya, for sketching the illustrations appearing in this book. My thanks are also due to Mr. Uday Shankar whose sketch of the "Rhythm of Life" is included in the chapter on the "Kathakali Dance Exercises." I acknowledge the courtesy of Rajkumar Shree Prabhatdevji Rana of Dharampur State and Mr. Rajendra Shankar in offering me, directly and indirectly, their invaluable

assistance. Mr. A. S. Bhatnagar kindly helped me in preparing the Index.

I am grateful to Sri Gopi Nath, Palace Dancer, Travancore, for his kind Foreword to the book. As the greatest artiste of the time, he will ever behold the cause of Kathakali.

I must express my heartfelt gratitude and indebtedness to our illustrious Maharaja, His Highness Maharana Shree Vijayadevji Rana, Maharaja Saheb of Dharampur State, who has graciously given an Introduction to this book. Doubtless, as a great exponent and critic of art he is, he shall live for all times.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'H. S. Pandey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

METRO-MUSIC COLLEGE

MUTTRA

March 1943 .

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

By  
HIS HIGHNESS MAHARANA SHREE VIJAYA-  
DEVJI RANA, MAHARAJA SAHEB OF  
DHARAMPUR STATE

There lies inherent in every living creature an instinct or potential power which tends to make one or the other movement of the body indicating some meaning to which a dancer nomenclatures as "gesture." Life itself is termed a composition of an art peculiar to its own measures. The dancer recalls to memory the sacred life of the great *avatars* and people of the nation. Thus, dancing lies at the root of all processes towards the attainment of salvation and *bhakti* (worship and devotion). The universe is the result of the ecstatic dance of Brahma, the Creator. In short, every *Kriya* (action) of God is a dance in itself—the human being forming the minutest dancing atom in the present cycle of the Universe. Every

action or movement that human being performs is the direct command of the soul and that action is termed *dainic nrtya* (everyday dance). The existence of the supreme power of the Abstract Life, or, of God, in every *Kriya* of the living being in a latent form helps in developing the various dynamic forces of the human nature, and the awakening of these forces lead a man to "dance."

*Nrtya* is the outcome of five *Kriyas* (actions) of God, viz., *Sṛṣhti*, or, *Avirbhava* (Universe or Creation), *Sthiti* (Preservation or Protection), *Samhara* (Destruction), *Tirobhava* (Veiling, Embodiment, Illusion or Giving Rest) and *Annugraha* (Release or Salvation). These subjective and objective actions in turn are the different forms of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheswara and Sadashiva. "In the night of Brahma, Nature is inert, and cannot dance till Shiva wills it; He rises from his rapture and dancing sends through matter pulsing waves of awakening sound, and lo! matter also dances appearing as a glory round about Him."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anand K. Coomaraswamy, "Dance of Shiva," p. 66.

Shiva, the greatest of all our deities, is depicted in the cosmic pose of a dancer who perpetually stands for an image of reality and truth, the keys to the complex and complicated tissues of human life and lives in general, which form an independent theory of Nature, not simply satisfactory and adaptable to a single clique, race, or nation, nor acceptable or worthy of consideration to the philosopher, thinker and worshipper of one century only, but universal in its appeal to the votary, the worshipper, the mediator, the philosopher, the thinker, the lover, the gametic and the artist of all ages and all countries.

The four significant actions of Lord Shiva connotethat the universe is created, protection is granted, release is offered and destruction is undertaken, all at the Will of God. The drum stands for creation, fire for destruction, protection proceeds from the hand of Hope, the foot held aloft gives release.

Of all the arts, the art of dancing first expresses itself in human person. Music, acting, poetry form a single compartment of human personification, while sculpture, painting and all other arts of design proceed in another stream. There is



no primary art beyond these two arts, and their origin is much earlier than man himself, and dancing came first. It may be that earlier than human existence dancing and architecture have been the result of the same impulse. Edmund Selous suggests that the nest of birds is the chief early form of building and the creation of nest may have first arisen out of their ecstatic sexual dance.<sup>1</sup>

All forms of dances have their histrionic background of evolution. Topographic conditions, climate, language, deportment and *mise en scène* of folk dances indigenous to a nation and the bodily structure of the people are the main guiding conditions for the suggestion of a particular type of dancing. The striking example can well be cited of the dance forms in the plains of the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra rivers, Burmese and Peninsular India dances. There is considerable difference in the artistic representation of one form of Kathak dancing in the Gangetic and Indus plains and the other in Rajputana; Manipuri dance of Bengal and of Assam; Tanjore and

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Selous in "Zoologist," December, 1901.

Kathakali dances, or Kathak and Kathakali dancing; Garba, the Gujerat folk dance, and Kathakali, the folk dance of Malabar, etc.

*Nṛtya*, *Githa* and *Vadhyā* are the three essential factors of our *Sangitha*. Dancing (*Nartana*) has three stages, *viz.*, *Natya* which essentially represents theatrical performances; second *Nṛtta* which conveys rhythmic movements of the body without *tala* or time measure; and, third *Nṛtya* meaning rhythmic movements of the body under time measures. It depicts some story which appeals to the human heart.

The joyous strokes of the feet of the children, the cosmic play of philosophers' thoughts, rise and fall according to the same laws of rhythm. If we overlook the grand principle and motto lying in the root of the art of dancing, we not only fail to understand the supreme manifestation of physical life, *i.e.*, the life in the external space of human action, but also the supreme symbol of Spiritual or Abstract Life, which is the cause of all human directions. Thus, the Life has no existence, or its existence has no meaning—either of which, under apparent conditions, is an absurdity.

Summarising the above statement, the significance of dancing lies in its truest form in a single and an intimate concrete appeal of a general rhythm—that general rhythm which does not merely mark life, but the universe in its wide sense; and if one is still persistent to consider it a narrow suggestion, it is the sum total of all cosmic influences which reach and effect the human life. It need surprise us not at all that rhythm, ever tending to be moulded into a time, should mark all the physical and spiritual manifestations of life.<sup>1</sup>

Dancing is the supreme expression alike of religion and of love—of religion from the earliest time of human existence we can compute of, and of love from the age much anterior to the birth of man. Tracing the history of the origin of dancing in human person, it is seen that this art is intimately entwined with the human behaviour in respect to the tradition of war, of labour, of pleasure, of education, whereas some of the wisest philosophers and the most ancient civilisations have considered the dance as “the pattern in

<sup>1</sup> Havelock Ellis in “The Dance of Life,” p. 34.

accordance with which the moral life of men must be woven.”<sup>1</sup>

Hindus believe that to dance is to take part in the cosmic control of the world. Every sacred dionysian dance is regarded as an imitation of the *divya-kriya* or the divine action. Lucian remarks in his essay on dancing that “you cannot find a single ancient mystery in which there is no dancing, in fact, most people say of the development of the Mysteries that they dance them out.”<sup>2</sup>

The auto-intoxication of rapturous movement brings the devotees for a while at least, into that self-forgetful union with the not-self which the mystic ever seeks. The ecstatic Hindu dance in honour of Shiva became in time a great symbol of “the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of.” Pantomimic dances, however, with their effort to heighten natural expression and to imitate natural process, bring the dancers into the divine sphere of creation and enable them to assist vicariously in the energy of the Gods. The dance, thus, becomes the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Ellis.

presentation of a divine drama, the vital reenactment of a sacred history in which the worshipper is enabled to play a real part.<sup>1</sup>

The art of Kathakali is the art of expressing the feeling by mere gesticulation which connotes a group of ideas, like a dumb person who uses a gestural code to speak his feelings. These gestures are a combination of a set of actions under different *rasas* (aesthetic moods) and *bhavas* (the accessory moods of *rasas*).

Bharatha's *Natya Sastra* deals with four classes of actions (*Abhinayas*), viz., first, *Sattvika* (*Bhava* or sentiment); second, *Angika* (gesture); third, *Vacika* (e.g., singing); and fourth, *Aharya*, i.e., dress and *mise en scène*. He attaches great importance to *Sattvika abhinaya*.

Of all the various schools of dancing in India, Kathakali embodies the richest gestural code and makes a free use of it in alluding a story. It has twenty-four alphabet-which are termed as *Mudras*. There are about five hundred different gestures to connote about five hundred words. "The gesture

<sup>1</sup> Havelock Ellis in "The Dance of Life," pp. 37-8.

may be imitative in its origin or allusive or mantric and in the little flurries of pure dance which punctuate the *padams* a sort of synthesis of gesture is used: the hands are used in *Mudras* but form no gesture with precise meaning. These passages known as *Kakasams* using only a vague stylised gesture are less remote from European notions of dancing.”<sup>1</sup>

Kathakali dancing may be divided into “tribal” and “spectacular” dancing. Tribal dancing is performed by the whole group of actors for their own psycho-physical satisfaction, or, in aid to a good crop, or, as a prayer for bringing rains. “Spectacular” dancing is performed to be watched and appreciated by educated audience, although behind it there is the primary idea of “pleasing the gods.”

It comprises great movements of the hands and of several physical attitudes. The suppleness and agility that is present in the actor’s body magnifies the actions. Hand poses follow facial expressions. The movement of eyes, eyebrows, lips,

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Stan Harding “Illustrated Weekly of India,” August 20th, 1939.

cheeks, teeth, and such other movable parts help in the formation of a meaningful expression.

Nature has endowed Malabar with such natural conditions which may help in the development of the art of *Naratana*. It enjoys the *deva-danam* to present the highest form of artistic skill in a dance. Young lads of 11 years join a *Kalari* (a sort of gymnasium) where their body is massaged and each muscle is relaxed to the extent that it is very susceptible to a slight bent in the posture. When their body attains agility, suppleness and charm they are trained in the art of acting and dancing. It takes about six years for a lad to master this dance-drama. Nambudri Pandits are the backbones of the Kathakali.

Kathakali's origin and development owe gratitude to the Royal family of Travancore. The Raja of Kottarakkara (17th century) is the earliest exponent of this art. During his time, the Kathakali plays were staged continuously for twenty-four hours without any break. One would be enthralled to witness this dance-drama during some festival in Travancore. It is a thing of great pride that this art is still being developed

under the patronage of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore who is a great art connoisseur.

The Kathakali has contributed a memorable superb art of acting and dancing in the *Nritya* literature of India. So long as this art of dancing is living, its high technique would be unchallengeable. It draws much authority from Bharatha's *Natya Sastra*, although it is considered that *Hasta Lakshan Dipika* is the earliest treatise on the subject (of Kathakali). But, whereas, *mudras* are the same to a great extent in both the works, the descriptions about their formation differ. It is taken that this work is more confusing and unauthoritative than the *Natya Sastra*.

In the following pages, Gayanacharya Avinash C. Pandeya, a distinguished authority on Indian music and dancing has dealt with the art of Kathakali in an intelligent and scholarly manner which shows his deep and profound study. His close and intimate relation for the last few years with scholars on Kathakali has helped him in presenting this work which is of a very fascinating and interesting nature. This book gives a clear insight into the subject it deals with.



## CHAPTER II

### ORIGIN OF KATHAKALI

During the earliest days of humanity before man spoke a language, gesture had been the most effective source of expressing thoughts. When man evolved, the art of gesture was further developed. Even to this day when the language of civilisation has achieved the highest marvels for expressing thoughts, the art of gesticulation still persists and remains a predominant and an intimate associate of the be-all and the end-all of all men. Like other folk dances the art of Kathakali definitely reflects the martial characteristics of the people of Kerala. It expresses the innermost feelings of its peoples in a most lively manner. Suggested to be having the "God-value," Kathakali has been the most popular and favourite amusement and a dramatic play to keep alive a spirit of godliness in the land.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. V. Poduval, B. A., Director of Archaeology, Travancore, in "The Art of Kathakali," p. 1.

The origin of the Kathakali may be traced to the *Tantric* (or ritualistic) period of the Vedic Age, but it took a unique form in the first half of the sixteenth century. In the psychological study of the human behaviour in the activities of Nature, the Man *danced* in the forests of Kerala. This dance was an admixture of the cosmic passions of man, his erotic pleasures and his "Inner Talks" with the beauties of Nature, his natural graceful movements, elaborate gesture, picturesque costume (guided by the changing colours of the sun), grand harmonic make-up suggested by the herbs of the forest trees and vigorous and triumphant music sounding out of the crude instruments manufactured by him, that the Kathakali became a unique dance-drama of gallic-grace, high art, and melodious music.

The Raja of Kottarakkara<sup>1</sup> (1575-1650 A.D.)

<sup>1</sup> It is related that once the Raja of Kottarakkara took Zamorin of Calicut off his guard. The Zamorin was a great connoisseur of Kathakali and the Raja was a great Kathakali dramatist and an accomplished actor. During his visit to the Zamorin, the Raja, without the knowledge of other participants, took an active role in the performance. The Zamorin was pleased with the artistical skill of the new actor,

an eminent scholar was the first composer and originator of the Kathakali. Under his regime there was a revolutionary revival of the ancient folk dance-drama in a new garb and an improved form. The new interpretation of the dance was borrowed from the old text of *Ramanattam*<sup>1</sup> (for the earliest themes theatrically represented were the stories of Sri Rama, one of the *Avatars*, incarnations of Lord Vishnu) with new modifications. The Raja of Kottarakkara composed eight incidents of Sri Rama from his birth to coronation after killing Ravana. In acting these themes were based on Bharatha's *Natya Sastra* principles. Thus, the art of Kathakali developed under his regime combined the grace of the folk-lore of Malabar and highly artistical technique of Bharatha.

but, to his surprise, when he was about to offer a present to him, recognised him, the old Raja of Kottarakkara of about fifty years. The Raja is the author of four well-known Kathakali plays.

<sup>1</sup> The theme of *Ramanattam* is the complete story of Ramachandra starting from the *Putrakamesti* sacrifice (sacrifice for obtaining a son) of Dasaratha and ending with the siege of Lanka, the citadel of Ravana.

Rajendra Shankar, *The Mime of Kathakali*, Modern Review, March, 1935.

This art remarkably flourished between 1665 and 1743 A. D.

According to an authorised version of *Ramanattam* by Professor Pisharoti lately of the Annamalai University, a certain Zamorin of Calicut organised a type of performance known as *Krisnattam* which even to this day survives with all its grandeur. It resembles in various aspects the model on which Jayadeva's *Githa Govinda*<sup>1</sup> is composed.

<sup>1</sup> In the 14th and 15th centuries A.D. the music of Travancore underwent a remarkable transformation by the introduction of the *Githa Govinda* of Jayadeva, which, in many respects, transmuted the musical melodies extant in the country and gave them a profound grace and dignity combined with majesty. The charm of the *Githa Govinda* lies in its sweet and mellifluous diction with abundant use of alliteration and complex rhymes, and in its expression of exuberant erotic emotions. Its songs have a strength, a depth and an assurance combined with a beauty, a pathos and piety unexpressed before, and on that account, took a deep hold on the religious instincts of the people. The grace of sound and diction exquisitely employed in them set the standard of musical melody in the state and they are even now sung in the important temples of the (Travancore) State. The result was the happy introduction of the use of the *Padams*, or, musical compositions, couched in a mellifluous concord of sweet sounds. The precursor of this type of composition in Travancore was Virakerala Varma (whose songs are embodied in his *Ramayanam Kathakali* plays) 17th century A.D., the Raja of Kottarakkara, who is

The success of *Krisnattam* induced a neighbouring chief to beg for a loan of the troupe of performers on the eve of some festive occasion. It is alleged that owing to internal feuds and political rivalry between the chieftains of neighbouring countries, the Zamorin, besides refusing to send the performers, insulted and humiliated the chief by remarking: It is useless to depute the troupe because his court would be neither able to appreciate nor understand anything because of the high artistic standards of the performance.

This abusive reply was retaliated by the chief who organised a parallel mode of entertainment which he called *Ramanattam*. It is this name which was later transformed into *Kathakali* or *Attakatha*.

Much earlier than *Krisnattam* was introduced by the Raja of Kottarakkara, two older forms of dramatic representations were the *Chakkia* Ku-

supposed to be the founder of the Kathakali.....The music of his compositions is the effect of combination of sounds as mere sensations.

*Music in Travancore*, R. V. Poduval, B.A., Director of Archaeology, Travancore.

*thru* and *Kutiyattam* whose history of origin dates back to the period of the Perumals, the Imperial Suzerains of Kerala. These dramatic forms still preserve most of the ancient traditions of the art of classical drama. The use of costume in Kathakali has been much influenced by these forms of ancient dramas. "The whole scheme of *abhinaya* (acting) and the use of *Mudras* (hand poses) and gestures were bodily adopted in the Kathakali from them in addition to its borrowing and refinement of facial make-up and costume. The Kathakali became more attractive and popular than the *Chakkaiar Kuthu* and *Kutiyattam* in course of time, as unlike them, its performance was not restricted to the precincts of the temples."<sup>1</sup>

The date as computed in the *Kali Chronogram*, *Grabya Stutirgathakaih*, shows that *Krisnattam* was firstly staged in 1657 A.D. From this data we can safely arrive at the conclusion that the Kathakali originated in the later half of the seventeenth century.

It seems from the formation and names of

<sup>1</sup> R. V. Poduval, B.A., in "The Art of Kathakali," p. 16.

*Mudras* used in the Kathakali that they have the earliest origin from the symbolic representations of animals and tangible objects, like *Pataka*, the flag; *Kapota*, the dove; *Kartarimukha*, the scissors tips, etc. These representations were undoubtedly evolved during the Tantric Period when hand poses had been used in the worship of God. But their modifications in the forms in which they exist to-day owe to the great sage, Bharatha, who has dealt with these at length in his *Natya Sastra* (the Science of Dancing).

The art of Kathakali has drawn its existence from various sources of dramaturgy, and with the development of civilisation it marched towards the attainment of perfection. It is a real representation of *Githa* (music), *Vadhyas* (instrument), and *Nrtya* (dancing). It is a histrionic art of great technique.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ART OF KATHAKALI

Of all the various prevalent forms of dancing in India, *e.g.*, the *Kathakali* of Malabar, *Kathak* in the North, *Manipuri* in the East, *Garba* in Gujerat, and *Dasiatam* in Tanjore and Tamilakam districts, *Kathakali*, the pantomimic dance-drama of Kerala has the richest gestural code in use for the reason that its preponderative dramatic and pantomimic nature required it. Kerala, with its exuberantly verdant and snug little regions full of soaring trees and tangled lianas, affords an ideal ground for the development of *Natya* (drama), *Nr̥tya* (Pantomime), and *Nr̥tta* (dancing), Music and Literature.

*Abhinayas*, or modes of conveyance of theatrical pleasure to the spectator, are four, *viz.*, "*Sattvika*", conveyed by the effort of the mind (*Bhava* or sentiment); second, *Angika*, *i.e.*, the natural movement of the various parts of the body when any thought is conveyed or expressed (ges-



ture); third, *Vacika*, exhibition in words (e.g., singing); and, lastly, *Abhaya* i.e., the dress, deportment and *mise en scène*.

The psychic conditions which accompany the incidents of a story, like perspiration, tears, trembling, horripilation, petrification and such other emotional causes, are classified under *Sattvika abhinaya*. Incidents of a story are exhibited by means of musical dialogue and verses (i.e., *Vacika Abhinaya*). This vocal accompaniment is interpreted in acting by means of *Mudras* (hand poses), symbols and gesture. This is known as *Angika Abhinaya*. All these three forms of *Abhinayas* together with *Abhaya Abhinaya* have a peculiar combination in Kathakali, and make it an interpretative dance to the accompaniment of music. In other words, the art of Kathakali is the art of acting. It is a compound art and its preponderative dramatic character is vividly reinforced with Dance, Music, Poetry and Painting. Therefore, a meaningful Kathakali expression is never without the expressive movements of the organs of the body (accompanied with facial expressions and ruled by the laws of rhythm), and various other

physical attitudes (combined with *Mudras*).

The Kathakali actor has a flexible and agile body. Limbs have a swift and smooth flow on the dance-floor and facial expressions undergo minor modifications in accordance with the *Rasa* or the aesthetic moods, under which the incidents of the story are expressed. Waist has a great suppleness. To acquire these qualities the Kathakali actor undergoes an elaborate training, drilling and special forms of massaging. In fact, one cannot become a skilled actor of Kathakali unless he acquires a free and dexterous movements of the various organs of the body and a complete mastery over the formation of *Mudras*. His movements combine grace, suppleness, agility and charm which in turn depend upon the control and balance of his body and limbs as well as his eyes. His *pada-ghats* or leg strokes and foot-rhythm are governed by *Tala* or time measure.

In Kathakali much stress has been laid on gestures and rhythmic movements of the body and limbs which help in presenting a graceful mime. The art of Kathakali is the art of mimicry. It first expresses itself into a dramatic art and then in

the dance art. It comprises, therefore, the great movements of the body accompanied with gestural code, and artistic mime. There is nothing vaguely mystic or casual in its gesture-apparatus, but the dance can be visualised clearly and vividly as the art of movement is made rhythmic and logical. The Kathakali blends *Natya* and *Nritya* in one movement, although it uses more of mime than of actual dancing. The use of colour, costume, and make-up, peculiar and adaptable to its own conditions, present a unique art. The grace of facial expression leaves a deep impression on the spectator's mind. Its symbolism and gesture express not simply the most subtle emotions of man, but also of the object-realisation of the human personification, scenes, etc., around.

In the present-day *nautch*, the dancer is concerned mainly with the froth and facile radiance of the surface, and it lacks in expressing an idea, and in depths and subtlety. The Kathakali embodies the art of all these, because it does away with speech altogether. It is purely an indigenous pantomimic dramatic art which leaves an unforget-

table impression on the mind with its original and extraordinary technique—a technique which is found in the sculpture of Ellora and cave-painting of Ajanta.

Sixty-four hand poses connote five hundred words, while the alphabet of eyes express emotions. Face is the eloquent and the only index of the heart and mind. All emotional qualities, like, courage, fear, trembling, pity, tenderness, anger, and love, have their visible and remarkable expression on the facial mime cunningly and lightly displayed. "The eye-balls un-roll evanescent miracles. The dark eyebrows utter the hidden secrets of the heart. Contending feelings speak with a brace of tongue in each eye and even the same eye delivers opposite moods at the same time. The face becomes the open drama in which the story is drawn in successive shades and touches of lineament. And then there is the dance."<sup>1</sup>

There is a great appeal in *Githa* (vocal music) of the Kathakali. The actor dances to the melodies of the songster and he executes the dance

<sup>1</sup> Venkateshwar, *The Kathakali of Malabar* (Triveni, 1932).

movements with well-defined *padaghats* (leg-strokes), attractive, graceful and harmonious movements and gyrations. The art of leg-strokes is intricate and one has to be very skilled in giving beats. The powerful *bols* (wordings), *parans* and *tukras* (sub-divisions of wordings) provide a field of expansion and tremble the earth with foot-strokes.

The song suggests the particular type of *rasa* and *bhava* (the aesthetic delights and emotions), and the dance and mimicry are rendered most effective and rhythmic in harmony with these aesthetic appeals. The music holds the audience spell-bound while the actor depicts the story. There is a conglomeration of different elements borrowed from various sources, like *Chakkiar Kuthu* and *Kutiyattam*, but thoroughly modified in accordance with the conditions under which these have been preserved. "The Kathakali is a wonderfully powerful and intensely dramatic art that can hold an audience in its grip for hours together without a break."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. V. Poduval, "The Art of Kathakali," p. 16.

A skilled Kathakali actor exhibits the most common idea in a highly specialised technique and a fascinating manner. This Kerala art-form has won full admiration and wide attention of all art connoisseurs who are greatly impressed by its originality and systematised plastic movements bringing to life the ancient arts of painting and sculpture and depicting a legend. It, thus, intimately associates itself with the secular and social life, culture and traditions of this country.

In the development of the art of mimicry, "the whole gamut of literary expression of the flawless type has been reduced to elementary notions for which there are separate finger signs."

It would not be exaggeration to remark that the summit of Kerala stage has been achieved in the Kathakali. It is a unique way of expressing the national genius of Malabar in the realm of art suggested by exquisite rhythm and beauty, literature predominated by a powerful language hidden in the pantomimic representations, imagination vividly transmuted in the sentiment and emotion of the story, and beauty which combines the grace of *Abhinaya* (acting) and *Nrtya* (dancing).

The Kathakali may be said to be an art of interpreting *drśya Kavya* (a visible poem) through *abhinaya* (acting) and *nṛtam* (dancing). This indigenous *nṛtya kala* (the art of pantomime) has made “as distinctive a local variant as the Wayang-Organ of Java and Bali has done to the parent art of Bharatha *Natya*.”

There is a legend famous behind this classical dance-drama “so full of antiquarian and ethnological interest” that it was ordained by Brahma, the Creator, to be staged at the Indra Sabha (the Darbar of the King of Devas) “before the celestial beings for the delectation of the Gods.” The Kathakali has been taken to apprehend the Infinite through the rhythmic process of evolution. It (Kathakali), therefore, shows the artistic and scientific evolution and involution of a splendid system of acting and dancing, so enacted by the culture and civilisation of our ancestors.

During early days the dance was viewed with religious sentiments and it was found that it embodies the essence of four Vedas and *Purushartbama*. According to Nandi Keswara “The dance was valued even more than the Bliss which persons medita-

ting on Brahman experience." In Kathakali *Nr̥ttam*, i.e., graceful and harmonious movements, *Nr̥tya*, "the expression of innermost emotions by gestures," and *Natya*, the dramatisation having *Rasa* as its chief feature, are so blended that they produce a lively realisation of the story depicted. The whole show affects the inner feelings of the audience.

The Kathakali exerts a marvellous cultural influence over the Western dramatic art to which it has contributed the most essential principles of dramatisation, music, acting, language and dance, so as to make each subject an integral part of the whole. A remarkable change was introduced by Adolph Appia while staging the famous operas of Wagner by developing his own *Theory of the Word-tone Drama* towards the need of rhythm of music while acting and dancing. In the first half of the eighteenth century Appia wrote with great admiration of the art of Kathakali that the people of the West Coast of India delighted in spending nights in aesthetic enjoyment of the Kathakali performance. The *Word-tone Drama* has reached the state of perfection and



stupendous and graceful acting in Kathakali performances.

Credit goes to Mahakavi Vallathol, the greatest poet of Malabar, who has breathed life into the dying Kerala art of dance-drama, and through his efforts it is coming to its own magnificence. "This glorious renaissance of Kathakali has flared a radiant path for this marvellous art and more and more of enthusiastic Western admirers are flocking to Vallathol's *Kerala Kala Mandalam*."<sup>1</sup> This Academy has a band of supreme artists to impart training on the principles of dynamic dance movements. Poet Vallathol and his troupe of Kathakali dancers have succeeded in presenting the most artistical and magnificent art representation to a popular appreciation by the modern intelligentsia and Western admirers by modernising the system of presenting a play, by modifying the costume and the make-up of the actors, by shortening the duration of plays and by "fully exploiting the artistic and aesthetic phases of art," and by still further harmonising the rhyth-

<sup>1</sup> K. P. P. Tampy, *Kathakali*, Indian Review, December, 1939.

mic flow of music with dance and acting, but conserving at the same time, the great antiquity of movement, the inherent, and ancient grandeur and individuality of the art. The modernisation of this art-form and the greater recognition received by it from Western art connoisseurs who have found in it a treasure house have made a statement, needing no qualification, that the art of Kathakali will never die so long as ancient Hindu traditions, culture and civilisation and its creative art survive on earth.

Sri Gopinath, the "real artiste"<sup>1</sup> and the Palace dancer of Travancore, has started the *Sri Chitrodaya Nartakalayam* which imparts training in the Hindu *Naratana* art based on Bharatha's *Natya Sastra* and is in vogue in Kerala. A troupe of performers is maintained in the institute which is the best in all India. Sri Gopinath has received a wide admiration and appreciation of world-India art critics.

In the words of a Travancore art critic:<sup>2</sup>

"The Kathakali is the most brilliant exposi-

<sup>1</sup> Late Dr. Sir Rabindranath Tagore.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. K.P.P. Tampy.

tion of the national genius of Kerala rising from the pit to the platform and expanding the vision to the highest altitudes of poetic imagination and into the deepest recesses of the heart."

The Kathakali is a "creamed art" of the blended compound complexities of creative energy, poetry, literature, language, dance, drama, and music, aesthetic appreciations and vital and harmonious movements, full of a suggestive pantomime, symbolism, melody, colour, grace and magnificent intricacies and subtleties of dramatic expression and architectural and pictorial beauties.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DANCE IN AND THE TECHNIQUE OF KATHAKALI

The more one puts in labour, the better one becomes a skilled actor in Kathakali. It is true of all arts, but the Kathakali requires a vigorous training in the beginning. Between the age of 11 to 14 years the pupil goes to an *Asan*, the teacher of a *Kalari* (a kind of gymnasium) and offers him *danam*, a present, in either coin or in clothes; and with his *guru diksha* (benediction) he enrolls himself for training. The pupil receives a *Kutchu* (a piece of rough cloth 3 yds. long and 6 inches broad) from the teacher, and ties it round his waist. Afterwards oil sesamum is lightly rubbed over his body, and then he is taught to stretch, move, and wave his hands and legs so that nimbleness and agility may be obtained in movements. When the pupil begins to perspire through this exercise, he has to lie flat on the floor with face upwards, in the first instance, and then face to-

wards the ground, knees resting on a soft matting of straw and plantain fibre. The preceptor, supporting himself by means of a rope above, "shampooes" the pupil with his leg massaging, or, rather with his big toes going dexterously and elaborately all over the joints, lungs, etc., for more than half an hour. This massaging brings flexibility and relaxation in the muscles and joints of the body. In the noon, he is trained in dexterous and rhythmic movements of the body and legs.

The second course is the training of the movements of eyes, strides, eye-brows, cheek, neck, lips, etc., for the expression of different *rasas* (aesthetic emotions). The third stage consists in the depiction and formation of *mudras* and the use of finger signs. Lastly, movements under *Tala* or time limitations are taught. Both hands and feet follow the rhythm of the drum. It takes three to five months in learning these four courses of training. When the pupil has proved himself skilled in these, he is first presented in a Kathakali performance. Proficiency is achieved in a course of years after strenuous practice and rehearsals known as *Cholliyattam*, i.e.,

acting with the accompaniment of recitals and the rhythm of *Chenda*, the indigenous drum. The minimum period of practice for a skilled Kathakali actor is six years; and every year during rainy season (June to August) he has to undergo an elaborate massaging in the *Kalari*. He practises various feats of arms, feet, body, eyes, eye-lashes, lips, cheeks, neck, head, knee, etc.

It is only when the actor attains a free and dexterous movement of the various movable organs of the body and a mastery over the formation, combination, and computation of fingers in hand poses, that he can be called a "Kathakali actor." He understands the meaning of the various gestures, for precision in executing them has been acquired by him through an elaborate practice. The dance itself is an intimate part of the entire pantomimic play—gesture being its "soul."

Dances prevailing in Kerala may be classified into (1) religious, (2) semi-religious and (3) secular. Those performances which are known as *Bhagavati Pattu*, *Tiyyattu*, *Pana*, *Pattu* and a host of others, are religious, because these are performed in a temple or temple precincts of the goddess

Bhagavati, or, even at homes in honour of the goddess on some holy and auspicious day of celebration.

The second type includes highly technical performances of *Kuttu*, *Krisnattam*, *Sanghakkali* and others. These are semi-religious owing to the presence of the atmosphere of sanctity and holiness, perhaps, on account of the abundance of Sanskrit in the language or the religious themes and legends being incorporated in the subject of the play.

The secular type of performance is the most popular of all. It includes *Tullals*, *Mobiniyattam*, *Kayyukottikkal*, *Pathakam* and among others, the Kathakali which includes between them the arts of acting, singing, dancing, and the art of putting on special costumes, and make-ups. Kathakali performances are not confined in the temple-courtyards, but they are held in the open air under the sky. Before the performance begins *Chendakaran*, the instrumental musician, broadcasts the news by beating the drum. The process is known as *Kelikottu*. This sounding awakes all to be ready to witness the performance.

The actual staging begins after a performance "to please the atmosphere and the deities" has been given free at the temple of some village deity. This performance is known as *Sevakali* and serves three main purposes, *viz.*, first, pleasing the gods, second, creating calm atmosphere among the people, and third, "making *reclame* for themselves by giving a foretaste of their wonderful work of art." There is no restriction as regards the entry for witnessing the performance. In this respect it resembles with the *Rasa Lila* performances of the Brij (Muttra District), *Halleesaka* of Gujerat, and *Jatra* of Bengal. Musical accompaniments are a pair of heavy cymbals, a gong and a drum known as *Maddalam* of the *Mridanga* type together with a two-faced drum called *Chendal* played with a stick. Musicians do not wear any special costume.

Generally the performance starts at about nine (*i.e.*, after Supper) in the evening. The curtain is pulled. Actors who have to make the first appearance stand hidden behind.

This first appearance on the stage is known as *purappadu* or the debut. The technique and



presentation is all the more cumbersome where the debut is preserved by the appearance of a hero or heroine of the play. The colour is subtle, music is powerful, wicks are bright and the royal ensigns glitter. They produce a powerful and thrilling effect on the audience who witness the performance with rapturous delight and admiration.

Actors in the *purappadu* stand sideways with their knees bent. Both orchestra and curtain-holders are alarmed for their duties. The debut serves this purpose. Regular singing and instrumental music begin. The singers stand behind the actors. Before the actual performance commences the drummers display their cleverness and the songsters sing the *Manjuthara* which is a selection of some verses from Jayadeva's *Githa Govindam*. With the rhythm of music and *bhava* (emotion) of songs the actor is seen dancing, stretching and waving his limbs. The audience is alert, critics wake up for a critical scrutiny of movements and actors play their parts. This prelude behind the curtain is commonly referred to as *Purva-ranga* by Bharatha in his *Natya Sastra* and in the Kathakali it is known as

*Totayam*. Just after this, actors come out and perform *Totayam Puraffaln* (which resembles to the performances termed as *Nandi* by Bharatha). Except the characters of demons and wicked, no other character groans, squeaks, speaks or shouts which is performed in a characteristic way and this has led to a very specialised form of gestural code full of pantomimic representations, and in it the exquisite use of *Rasas* and *Bhavas* (aesthetic sentiments and emotions) elaborates the technique of Kathakali *nartana* (dancing).

The subtlety and intricacy that are entwined in facial expressions are things of great beauty and art. *Mudras* accompanied with facial gestures speak a powerful language. At the end of a pantomimic conversation there is a little of marching about and dancing. This is known as *Kalasa*.

The Kathakali is essentially performed by men and, in it, the female part is also exhibited by males. Its plays combine the excellence of dramatic and literary flows. The dialogues are in songs while the intermediate incidents of the story are written in verses. These dialogues are written in Malayalam, while the incidents are in Sanskrit and Mala-

yalam. The verse (or *Sloka*) introduces the actors to the scene, and end with the words "And so they spoke."

Kathakali literature has a wide field for developing a rich background of music, literature and other arts. The religious sanctity and devotion to this mimetic art, absence of personal elements, a lofty ideal and craftsmanship in obedience with the laws of dancing, and an exquisite and a vivid understanding of the application and depiction of correct *rasas* (aesthetic sentiments) and mastery over the laws of rhythm, are some of the distinguished and significant principles lying in the root of this unique Dance-Drama which derives its enactment of stories from the legends of *Puranas*, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayanam*.

The Kathakali performance combines the grace of rhythm, harmony and cadence. The swift movements of limbs are acrobatic (and not obtuse). The use of the different limbs and organs of the body, under the guiding principles of aesthetic emotions, enhances the grace of acting. The transmutation of both emotion and motion into the narration of the dance increases the

rhythmic vitality, sweet cadence and rich beauty of the art, and with these, flow the eternal joy that overshadows the human heart.

The whole organic rhythmic organisation profusely embellished with and rendered into a complete harmony of aesthetic emotions and delights, render the dance and mimicry to speak the consonant wordings of pantomime into a highly developed artistic and technical language-code. Dancing to the tunes of the singer and rhythm of the drummer, and using stylised gestures, lead in executing well-defined foot-strokes, attractive and harmonious movements and gyrations.

The themes of Kathakali plays are both in tragedies and comedies, the former being more realistic than the latter. The "narrative" and "romantic" aspects of this ancient folk art of Malabar is the darkness of the calm-whispering nights of Kerala. There are no sceneries. The performance begins under the shadow of a huge brass lamp of cocoanut oil having several wicks which "emit" a powerful expression of "all-silence" overshadowing the entire universe and glittering

like the only “life” and “light” in the midst of a sober atmosphere. They stand three to three and a half feet above the ground.

Hindus of high social status take part in the Kathakali performance. Some of the best pieces of Kathakali art are to be witnessed during the birthday ceremony of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore and during general *utsavoms* (temple festivals), especially of Shree Padma-nabha-swamy Temple at Trivandrum. For this reason there are special Kathakali troupes attached to every well-known temple in Travancore.

Generally a Kathakali performance takes about nine hours. Yet such a long period is not monotonous to the audience, because even most ordinary aspects of the story are depicted in such an artistical skill that no one feels monotony. An actor is considered to be more skilful if his acting is elaborate—an acting which demands great experience, vivid imagination and complete mastery over the formation of *mudras*. It, therefore, can be said of the Kathakali dancer :—

“In thy dance, Divine Dancer freedom finds  
its image and dreams their forms.

Its cadence weaves the threads of things  
and unwinds them for ages;

Charms the atom's rebellion into beauty,  
gives rhythm to the symphony of stars;  
thrills life with pain,

And churns up existence into surging joys  
and sorrows.”

## CHAPTER V

### SYMBOLISM AND GESTURE

In Kathakali much stress has been laid on gestures and rhythmic movements of the body and limbs. Gestures have been divided into three forms: *viz.*, *Prakritik* (natural), *Pratirupi* (imitative) and *Prasarit* (amplified).

1. "Natural" gestures are unconsciously produced when an actor is moved by some emotion.
2. "Imitative" gestures represent or reproduce the formation of an object.
3. "Prasarit" gestures are formed by the amplification of secular purposes of the orthodox types of *Tantric* (*i.e.*, ritualistic) symbols. . Worship (*aradhana*), offering (*dana*), benediction (*varada*) are examples of this form of gesture.

These gestures are exhibited by three controlling agencies, *viz.*, first, head; second, limbs; and third, *mudras* or hand poses. Head mani-

fest emotions and comprises the actions of the neck, eyes, eye-lids, pupils of the eye, eye-brows, lips, teeth, nose, ears, chin, cheek, and tongue. The movement of limbs comprise the movement of the feet, heels, ankle, toes, waist, sides, and, in fact, of all the movable and flexible parts of the body. Finger signs (as opposed to *Mudras*) are employed to indicate and describe some action. They are known as *Sanketas*.

There are thirteen movements of the head (besides its natural posture) seven movements of the eye-brows, thirty-six glances of the eye, nine attitudes of the neck, nine actions of the eye-balls, nine actions of the eye-lids, six actions of the nose, six movements of the cheek, six movements of the lower lip, six actions of the chin, four kinds of facial expressions, and six actions of the mouth. In this way the different fundamental movements have been mentioned by the great sage Bharatha. In Kathakali, however, some of the above movements are used, e.g., nine movements of the head, six movements of the eye-brows, eleven glances of the eye and four attitudes of the neck. But for the benefit of my readers I will discuss



below all those actions which are described by Bharatha.

### A—THIRTEEN ACTIONS OF THE HEAD

i. *Akampita* (shaking). The head is moved side-ways, up and down. This helps in connoting the following :

to point, to recognise, to question, conversation, faultless and innocent.

ii. *Kampati* (quick up and down movements). This is used in expressing excitement, doubt, settle, threaten, question and pride.

iii. *Dhuta*. In this the head is lightly shaken. This helps to describe the following *Bhavas*:

Unagreeable, trouble, surprise, side glances, vacant and to check.

iv. *Vidhuta*. This is an action where the head is moved frequently, and is used to express the following :

to catch cold, to fear, intoxication, to feel feverish, and drunkenness.

v. *Parivahita*. When the head is moved from one side to another, the action is called

*Parivabita*. Its usages are :

source, wonder, pleasure, remembrance, anger, anxiety, trouble and playfulness.

vi. *Adbhuta*—is to lift the head obliquely and to keep in that position. It represents :

pride, ambition, corner glances and self-sufficiency.

vii. *Avadhuta*. If in the *Adbhuta* position the head is once bent down, it is *Avadhuta*. It symbolises the following :

information, invitation, to tell and to make sign.

viii. *Añcita*. In this the head is bent on one side. It represents the following :

ill-health, swooning, intoxication, trouble and anxiety.

ix. *Nibincita* (to lift the shoulder). In this the head is raised a little and shoulder touches it. The eye-brows are curved. This is shown by danseuse only. Its usages are the following :

Separation from the desired thing; in the absence of the lover, the silent exhibition of love; the separation, the sentiment of the

lover; self-restraint; to suppress the dignity and honour.

x. *Paravṛtta*—to bend the head from one side. It is used in expressing the following :  
turning and seeing at the back.

xi. *Utchepta* is to keep the head up. This signifies high and holy things.

xii. *Adbogati*—to keep the head down and bent. It is used in expressing :  
shyness, modesty, obeisance and sorrow.

xiii. *Lolita*. The head is kept moving in all the directions. It expresses the following :  
swooning, disease, intoxications, clemonical excitement.

xiv. *Prakṛita*—The head in its natural position. It helps in connoting the following :  
holy things, to study and to think.

#### B—THIRTY-SIX KINDS OF GLANCES

i. *Rasa Dr̥ṣhti* (sentimental glances): *Kanta* (lovely), *Bhayanaka* (terrible), *Hasya* (comic), *Karuna* (pathetic), *Adbhuta* (marvellous), *Raudra* (furious), *Vir* (heroic), *Bibhatsa* (disgusting).

ii. *Isthai Dr̥shti*—(Principal Glances): *Snigdha* (friendship), *Hr̥shta* (hilarious), *Dina* (mild and lowly), *Kṛudha* (angry), *Dr̥pta* (proud), *Bayanavita* (down with fear), *Jugupsit* (inquisitive or anxious), *Vismita* (amazed).

iii. *Sanchari Dr̥shti* (accessory glances): *Shunya* (void), *Malina* (gloomy), *Shranta* (tired), *Lajjavita* (bashful), *Glana* (dejected), *Shankita* (doubting or suspecting), *Vishanna* (disappointed or heavy with grief), *Mukula* (closed), *Kuncita* (narrow), *Abhitapta* (extremely distressed), *Jimba* (crooked), *Salilata* (mellowed), *Vitarkita* (doubting), *Ardha Mukula* (half closed), *Vibhranta* (astounded), *Vipluta* (confused), *Akekara* (eyeball repeatedly rolled), *Visoka* (free from grief), *Tr̥shta* (trembling), and *Madira* (intoxication).

### C—EIGHT KINDS OF LOOKS

*Sama* (steady looks), *Saci* (looking through the eyelashes), *Anuvṛtta* (look of configuration and identification), *Alokita* (surprised look), *Pralokita* (looking sideways), *Vilokita* (looking back), *Ullokita* (looking up), and *Avalokita* (looking downwards).

## D—NINE MOVEMENTS OF THE EYE-BALL

*Bhramara* (spinning the eye-balls), *Valana* (twisting, three cornered movement of the eyeball indicating kindness, mercy etc.), *Pata* (drooping), *Calara* (restless movement), *Sampavesa* (drawing the eye-ball in), *Vivartana* (looking askance), *Samudvṛtta* (raising the eyes and looking upwards), *Niskrama* (going out), and *Prakṛta* (natural look).

## E—NINE MOVEMENTS OF THE EYE-LIDS

*Unmesha* (to open), *Nimesha* (to close), *Prsta* (to open wide), *Kuñcita* (to slightly bend the lid), *Sama* (natural position), *Vivartita* (to throw upwards), *Spurita* (to flutter the lids), *Pibita* (to close furiously), and *Savitadita* (injured eye).

## F—SEVEN MOVEMENTS OF THE EYE-BROWS

The movements of the eye-brows follow the actions of the eye-lids and eye-balls. The different seven movements are—

*Utshepta* (to throw the eye lid upwards), *Patana* (to release the eye-lids downwards), *Bhṛakuti* (to move the eye-brows to and fro and afterwards holding them upwards), *Catura* (to spread),

*Kuñcita* (to bend downwards), *Recita* (to raise any one of the eye-brows) and *Sabhaja* (the natural position).

#### G—SIX ACTIONS OF THE NOSE

*Nata* (to close the nostrils), *Manda* (hiding), *Vikrasta* (to open the nostrils wide), *Sochvasa* (to breathe in deep), *Vikundita* (to contract the nostrils on disapproval or jealousy), and *Swabhavika* (natural posture of the nose).

#### H—SIX MOVEMENTS OF THE CHEEK

*Ksham* (downwards), *Phulla* (fully stretched), *Ghurna* (stretched and spread), *Kampita* (shivering), *Kuñcita* (contracted), and *Sama* (natural).

#### I—SIX MOVEMENTS OF THE LOWER LIP

*Vartana* (bearing), *Kampana* (fluttering), *Visarga* (spouting), *Vinighana* (to bend inwards), *Samadr̥ṣṭa* (to pierce the lip by teeth), and *Samudga* (natural).

#### J—SIX ACTIONS OF THE CHIN

*Kuttara* (to gnash the teeth), *Kbandana* (to rub the teeth together), *Cinna* (to contract the teeth),

*Cukkita* (to open wide), *Lebita* (to lip), and *Sama* (natural).

### K—SIX ACTIONS OF THE MOUTH

*Viniṛtta* (to open wide), *Vidhuta* (to open obliquely), *Nirbhanga* (downwards), *Burgna* (to open sideways), *Vivṛtta* (to open by separating the lips), and *Udvabita* (to open upwards).

### L—FOUR KINDS OF FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

*Swabhavika* (natural), *Prasanna* (to be pleased with surprise), *Rakta* (the reddening of the face, as in anger), and *Shyama* (the expression as in excitement).

### M—NINE MOVEMENTS OF THE NECK

*Sama* (natural), *Nata* (bent), *Unnata* (upwards), *Trasra* (bent on sideways), *Recita* (quickly whirling round), *Kuñcita* (slightly bent), *Añcita* (spread and bent on one side), *Vatita* (moved on any side), and *Vivṛtta* (facing other person).

These various movements are further supplemented by the movements of the chest, leg,

stomach, waist, calf, thigh and shoulder. When all the movements of the various movable parts of the body are combined a meaningful gesture is produced. And, since every movement is graceful and artistic every gesture is a meaningful art of deep symbolic purpose. Various symbols and hand poses supplemented by physical attitudes speak a powerful language to the eyes of the spectator.

While describing the importance of gestural code, Maharaja Sarangdevji says in his *Sangit Ratnakara* that the hand indices or poses (*sanketas* or *mudras*) should be used in a way to express sentiments with the aid of feelings conveyed through the eye, the eye-brow and the facial colour and the different limbs of the body.<sup>1</sup>

Where the hand is, there the eye must go; where the eye goes the mind must follow; and the object contemplated by the mind must bring out the natural and appropriate feelings: herein

*Vide Shloka*

Netra bhroo mukha ragadei rupangai rupabrimhitah,  
Pratyangaisch karah karya rasa-bhava Pradarsakah.



lies the sentiment of action.<sup>1</sup>

Dance-gestures include several *divya-kriyas* or divine actions of celestial dancers and they have their application and utility in the feelings, sentiments, emotions and aspirations of human beings. This representation of sentiments and emotions (*i.e.*, *Rasas*) in various physical attitudes and postures is based on certain *archetypal forms* which idealised the plastic conception of emotions.

*Mudras*, which are described as symbols of the hand, are visible signs or poses representative or suggestive of an idea of something tangible or abstract. These *Mudras* form a kind of pantomimic language in acting. In fact, they express in outward manifestation the innermost feelings and ideas of the actor.

*Mudras* owe their origin from the ritualistic practices of the Vedic Age and have been codified by the great sage, Bharatha, in his Sanskrit work, *Natya Sastra* (the Science of Dancing), and are

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Shloka

Yato haste statodristi ryato dristi stato manah,  
Yato mana stato bhava yato bhava stato rasah.

—Nandi Keshwara in *Abhinaya Darpan*.

also mentioned in various other treatises, like Nandi Keshwara's *Abhinaya Darpan*, *Hasta Lakshan Dipika*, etc.

*Mudras* are classified under two heads—first, *Asamyukta Hasta* (single hand poses) and second, *Samyukta Hasta* (double hand poses). Bharatha's *Natya Sastra* deals with 24 single, 13 double and 27 mixed *mudras*; while an old Malayalam manuscript gives us 24 single and 40 combined *mudras*. The *Silappathikaram* refers to 33 *mudras* in all. There are some other works which treat with 28 single and 24 combined *mudras*.

In Kathakali 64 *mudras* are used. These *mudras* seem to have been evolved from two standard works—*Agamas* and Bharatha's *Natya Sastra*, and they connote the usage of a group of ideas and objections. Whereas some *mudras* have only the double usages, many have both single and double usages. An average Kathakali actor attains perfection in the use of only four *mudras*, viz., *Pataka*, *Kataka*, *Mudra* and *Mushti*. Generally these four *mudras* suffice an actor to depict a story. The movement of the various *Hastas* (hand poses) according to their formation, sentiment and

emotion, has been classified by Bharatha as below :—

*Utkarsha* (exuberant), *Vikarsha* (pulling asunder), *Vyakarsha* (attraction), *Parigraha* (receiving), *Nigraba* (abstaining), *Ahvana* (inviting), *Jodana* (whipping or goading), *Sam-slekha* (embracing), *Viyog* (separation), *Rakshana* (protecting), *Mokshana* (repleasing or salvation), *Vikshepa* (throwing downwards), *Dhunana* (shaking), *Visarga* (rejecting), *Tarjana* (threatening), *Cedana* (piercing), *Bhedana* (chopping or spitting), *Sfatara* (breaking), *Motana* (squeezing or splitting), and *Tadana* (beating).

It would be evident from the above treatment of the subject that the Kathakali commands a highly skilled gestural code for the technique of its dance-drama.

## CHAPTER VI

### MUDRAS

#### (SINGLE HAND POSES)

I have explained above that *Mudras* (hand poses) are the “instruments of instruction”, with the actor (and also with the instructed public which can understand the art of dancing) in alluding (and understanding) a story. They are more of importance owing to the preponderance of mimetic representation in acting. *Mudra* literally means “seal”, and it seems that with the development of the art of *Nartana* (dancing) in Kerala its usage became more artistical and elaborate. Like the language of the deaf and the dumb, of savage tribes and secret societies, and of a child and animals, hand poses have so highly developed that they form a sort of codified gesture-language. These alphabet as has been referred above, form a complete vocabulary of more than five hundred words. It is possible that, as this histrionic art develops more and more

and moves towards perfection, there may be the possibility of alphabetical codification of the different words in the form of a dictionary. In the following pages I shall deal with the sixty-four *mudras* and their connotation of a group of ideas.

### MUDRAS IN KATHAKALI

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Pataka.         | 13. Sarpasirrassu. |
| 2. Tri-Pataka.     | 14. Mrigshirsham.  |
| 3. Karttarimukham. | 15. Añjali.        |
| 4. Ardhachandram.  | 16. Pallava.       |
| 5. Aralam.         | 17. Mukuram.       |
| 6. Sukatundam.     | 18. Bhoramaram.    |
| 7. Mushti.         | 19. Hamsasyam.     |
| 8. Sikharam.       | 20. Hamsapaksham.  |
| 9. Kapittham.      | 21. Varddhamanam.  |
| 10. Kathakamukham. | 22. Mukulam.       |
| 11. Suchimukam.    | 23. Umanabham.     |
| 12. Mudra.         | 24. Katakam.       |

### SINGLE HAND POSES

Now I discuss below the above twenty-four *Aykaki Mudras* (single hand poses) used in Kathakali and give their different usages.

PATAKA is formed by stretching both hands having fingers upright, except the right-finger, which is bent inwards the palm. (According to Bharatha all the fingers must be fully stretched). The thumb is held erect touching the fore-finger. It alludes the usage of the following objects and ideas when formed with different postures of the body :

(a) *Single* :

Day, Walk, Tongue, Forehead, Body, Like or As, And, Messenger, Sandy and Sprout.

(b) *Double* :

Sun, King, Elephant, Lion, Bull, Crocodile, Arch, Creeper, Flag, Wave, Street, *Patal* (region under the earth), Earth, Hip, Vessel, Palace, Evening, Noon, Cloud, Anthill, Thigh, Servant, Leg, Disc, Seat, Thunderbolt, Towngate Building, Cart, Gentle, Crooked, Door, Pillow, Iron Club, Surface, of the foot, and Bolt.

*Pataka* originates (according to *Nṛtya Sastras*) from Brahma and is the symbol of victory. The

evolution of this *mudra* seems to be from a flag (see the illustration). From old paintings of the South we gather that the type of flag used during the Vedic Age was of somewhat a "V" shape. This has its justification. The upper large portion of the flag signifies God and the lower small portion, the earth. There is a sense of "protection." The bridegroom puts the *pataka* hand on the bride's hand in Vedic marriages, signifying thereby the promise of protection to be afforded to the bride. Flags of "V" shape are found even to-day on temples in some remote parts of India.

KATAKA: The middle finger and the fore-finger are bent inwards so that the former just touches the palm near the joint of the thumb while the fore-finger and the thumb touch each other at their extremities. The other two fingers remain extended. It is a gesture of communication or inquiry and represents the usage of—

(a) *Double* :

Vishnu, Krishna, Balabhadra, Arrow, Gold, Rama, Silver, A Female Demon, Sleep, Lady in Prominence, *Sri* or Wealth, *Vina* or Lute, Star,

Garland, Lotus or Water Lily, Demon, Crown, Iron Club, Particular, Chariot, With.

(b) *Single* :

Flower, Mirror, Female, *Homa* (a ceremonial offering to *Devas* into the sacred fire), a Sweat, little, Who, Which or What, Quiver, *Surmi* or Fragrance.

MUDRA : This *Mudra* is formed when the extremities of the fore-finger and the thumb touch each other (in a circular form) while other fingers remain stretched. It gives the idea of the following :

(a) *Double* :

Growth, Movement, Heaven, Sea, Thick or Dense, Forgetting, All, Announcement, Thing or Object, Death, Meditation, *Janeyu* (the sacred thread worn by Brahmins) and Straight.

(b) *Single* :

Brahma (Lord of Creation), Veda, Tree, Sky, Chain, Rice, Heart, *Dhyana*, *Sruti*, Affection, *Rakshasa* (Demon), Thinking, Desire, Self, Recollection, Knowledge or Wisdom, Creation,



Life, *Swarga*, Equality, Defame, Future, Negative and the Fourth.

MUSHTI: Here the thumb is placed either between the fore-finger and the middle finger, or the middle finger and the ring-finger and all other fingers are bent in the palm. It represents the following groups of ideas and objects :

(a) *Double* :

Charioteer, Prefix, Loveliness, Holiness or Purity, Spirit or Ghost, Imprisonment, Deserving, Existence, Heel or Ankle, Attraction, *Chourrie*, Yama or God of death, Mud, Medicine (or herb), Curse, Swinger-Hammock, Gift, Circumambulation, Digging, Renunciation, Spear, Heroism, Sun or Fire, Vomiting, Giving Birth, *Sudra*, *Yaksha*, Stick, Bow, Gift, Fight, Strength, Beauty, Singing, Digging, Negative.

(b) *Single* :

In Vain, Extreme or Excessive, Fie upon, Minister Crossing, Enduring, Permission, Gift, Victory, Bow, We, Single Sentence, Old Age, Robbing, Food.

TRIPATAKA is formed when all the fingers are held upright, the thumb slightly bent inwards, thus, touching the side of the fore-finger. This *Mudra* has no single usage in as much as it is always shown by both hands. Its double usages are :

Sunset, Commencement, Halo !, Drink, Body, Begging.

KARTARIMUKHA : The fore-finger and the middle finger are kept straight and the remaining two fingers are bent inwards. The thumb rests on the ring-finger. It connotes the following usages :

(a) *Double* :

Sin, Fatigue, Brahmin, Fame, Pitcher, House, A Religious Vow, Purification or Purity, Bank, Dynasty, Bamboo, Hunger, Hearing, Act of Speaking, Multitude, End, Hunting.

(b) *Single* :

Though, Word, Time, Gradation, We, Man, Mouth, Enmity, Boy, Mongoose.

ARDHACHANDRA : Here the fore-finger and the thumb are straight, while the rest three fingers

are slightly bent inwards. Its usages are :

(a) *Double* :

If, What ?, Helplessness, Sky, Blessed man, God, Remembrance, Grass, Man's hair.

(b) *Single* :

Starting, Smiling, What ?, Self-praise.

ARALAM : Its posture can be well understood from the illustration. It has only double usages : *viz.*,

Dull, Tree, Wedge, Bud, Sprout.

SUKATUNDA : The fore-finger is stretched and bent inwards at the top while the rest three fingers are stooped in the palm, the thumb touching the middle finger. It is always shown by both the hands. It connotes three ideas, *viz.*, Hand, Goad, and Bird.

SIKHARA : The fore-finger is held erect while remaining three are bent inwards the palm and the thumb rests on the middle finger. It connotes the following groups of ideas :

Roaming, Legs, Eyes, Sight, Way, Search, Ears, Drink, Hands, Wonder, Time, Wheels.

It has only double usages.

**KAPITTHA** : The fore-finger and the thumb touch at their extremities while the remaining three fingers are held erect. It has the following double usages :

Trap or Rein, Doubt, Feather of a Peacock, Drink, Touch, Going Back (Recede), Outside, Back, Descending, Footstep.

**KATAKAMUKHA** : In this the fore-finger and the middle finger are bent inwards; the thumb and the fore-finger touch at their extremities. The other two fingers are held upright separately. Its double usages are :

Coating, Servant, Hero, Wrestler, Shooting an arrow, Forest.

**SUCHIMUKHA** is the pointing finger. Its usages are :

(a) *Double* :

Broken, Jumping, Upwards, Word, Lakshmana, Fall, Mouth, Elsewhere, Eye-brow, Loose, Tail.

(b) *Single* :

Single, Alas !, Dull, Another, Plural, Hearing. A Digit of the Moon, Ancient, This One, King-

dom, Little, Witness, Giving Up, Come Thou, Go Thou, Fight.

**SARPASIRASU** : The thumb touches the side of the forefinger and all the fingers are held bending slightly inwards. Its single or double usages are :

Sandal Paste, Snake, Slowness, Sprinkle, Cheri-shing. Giving Water to God, Saint or Sage. The Flapping of Elephant's Ears, Massage of Wrestlers.

**MRIGASIRSHA** : The middle and the ring-fingers are bent inwards so that the middle finger just touches the extremity of the thumb. The other two fingers are held up-right. It has only two single usages, *viz.*, Deer and the Supreme Being.

**ANJALI** : When *Tripataka* hands are slightly bent and the sides touch each other, the *mudra* is known as *Añjali*. It represents the following usages :

(a) *Double* : -

Heavy Rain, Vomiting, Fire, Stream, Vibration (Loud Noise), Brightness, Hair, Ear-ring, Heat or Sorrow, Confusion, Always, River, Bathing, Drinking, Flowing, Blood.

(b) *Single* :

Conch, and Anger.

PALLAVA : See the illustration. Its usages are :

(a) *Double* :

*Vajra*, Summit of a Mountain, Ears of the Cow, Length of the Eye, Buffalo, Iron Club, Spear, Horn, Circulating.

(b) *Single* :

Distance, Leaf, Fume or smoke, Tail, *Rattan*, Paddy.

MUKURA : This *mudra* is formed when the fore-finger touches the top of the thumb, while the middle finger touches near the joint of the thumb. The ring-finger and the last finger are held stretched apart. (See the illustration).

Its usages are :

(a) *Double* :

Tusk or Fang, Separation, Part of the leg from the Ankle to the Knee, the Buttock of a Woman, Veda, Brother, Pillar, Mortar, Rapid or Violent, *Pisacha* (devil), Growth or Nourishment.

(b) *Single* :

Enemy, Beetle, Ray, Anger, Neck, Excellent, Bangle, Armlet, Negative.

BHRAMARA : Here the fore-finger is bent inwards and the remaining three fingers and the thumb are stretched upright. Its usages are as follows :

(a) *Double* :

Feather, Song, Water, Umbrella, Ear of the Elephant.

(b) *Single* :

*Gandharva*, Birth, Fear, Weep.

HAMSASYA hand is formed when both the hands are stretched and touch each other, as shown in the figure. Its usages are :

(a) *Double* :

Eye-ball, Soft, Dust, Pale, White, Blue, Red, Mercy, Tuft of Hair or a Line of Hair on the Abdomen.

(b) *Single* :

The First Rain, Hair, The Line of Hair on the

Abdomen, The Three-folds of Skin above the Navel of a Woman.

HAMSAPAKSHA Hand is shown by fully stretching the hands, the fore-finger slightly bent and drawn towards the thumb. It has a number of usages, *viz.*,

(a) *Double* :

Moon, Cupid, Wind, *Deva* (Heavenly Being), Mountain, Summit, Everlasting, Relation, Bedding, Rock, Enjoyment, Breast, Female Breast, Cloth, Conveyance, Falsehood, Lying Down, Fall, People, Beating, Covering, Spreading, Founding, Coming, Bowing Down, Bathing, Sandal Paste, Embracing, Following, Protecting, Reading, Mace, Cheek, Shoulder, Hair, Obedient, Blessing, Sage, Thus, Fish, Worship, Tortoise.

(b) *Single* :

You, Sword, Wrath, Now, I, In Front, Axe, Flame, Call, Getting on the Lap, Prevent.

VARDHAMANA : The thumb is drawn out, but all the fingers are bent inwards in the palm. It represents the following groups of ideas :



(a) *Single* :

A Whirlpool, Navel, Well.

(b) *Double* :

Ear-ring of a female, Jewelled Garland, Knee, A contemplating Sage, Drum, Elephant Driver.

MUKULA : The posture of the hand is similar to the *Sarpasirasu* hand, the difference being that the extremities of the thumb and the fore-finger touch each other. Its single or double usages are :

Jackal, Monkey, and Fading and Forgetting.

URNANABHA : If all the fingers and the thumb are relaxed downwards, the hand gives the form of *Urnabha*. Its double usages are :

Horse, Fruit, Leopard, Butter, Ice, Abundance, Lotus.

Thus are the single hand poses in Kathakali which help in representing a complete vocabulary of pantomime of high technical and artistical excellence and gallic-grace.

## CHAPTER VII

### MUDRAS

#### (DOUBLE HAND POSES)

In the last chapter I have attempted to give the different usages of the single hand poses. Now remains the combined hand poses which are forty in number. They are so called (*i.e.*, combined) because two different *hands* are combined to exhibit some *sense* or “meaning” when used under some particular sentiment and emotion and physical attitude. Besides these, there is a different formation for *Hamsa* (Swan) *mudra*. *Garuda* also is denoted by this *mudra*. If in *Garuda* the open fingers are closed and others opened (see illustration) in the same manner as in *Hamsa* then a ‘peacock’ is represented. Tortoise also, has a different computation of fingers (as will be evident from the illustration).

#### COMBINED MUDRAS

Nothing can be said how the forty combined

*Mudras* originated, and why do they connote particular objects; but it is evident from their artistical presentation by a skilled actor that they give the audience an idea of the meaning of his pantomimic display.

ANJALI-KATAKA, for example, is formed by the combination of the hands in *Añjali* and in *Kataka*, and it helps in indicating *Yagya* (holy sacrifice).

Similarly, ARDHACHANDRA-MUSHTI has the combination of two hands in *Ardhachandra* and in *Mushti* and indicates the moon at the zenith of the sky.

HAMSASYA-MUSHTI stands in representing the lover (or any object of love).

HAMSAPAKSHA-PATAKA indicates "agreeable to mind."

HAMSAPAKSHA-MUSHTI is used in representing *Yaksha* (holy sacrifice).

HAMSASYA-PATAKA helps in connoting the idea of *Kavya* (Prosody).

HAMSAPAKSHA (with both hands) indicates Monkeys, Hanuman, and the allied animals.

KATAKA in all its varieties indicates womanhood.

KARTARIMUKHA-MUDRA indicates the son or the grandson.

KARTARIMUKHA-MUSHTI essentially stands for indicating *Vidyadhara* (celestial being).

KARTARI-KATAKA is used to indicate science.

KATAKA-HAMSAPAKSHA is also exhibited as to indicate mother, or, a body in waiting.

KATAKA-MUSHTI indicates the following : widowhood, cohabitation, fight, Sri Rama, and gift of a woman.

KATAKA-SUCHIMUKHA indicates the daughter.

KATAKA-MUDRA is the symbol of truth, *Dharma* (religion).

KATAKA-MUKURA represents a handsome lady.

KARTARI-KATAKA represents a virgin girl.

MRIGASIRSHA-HAMSAPAKSHA *Mudra* is used for Shiva, the Natraj.

MUDRA-PATAKA indicates "a mark."

MUDRA-MUSHTI : stands to connote the father, and the *Senapati* (Commander-in-Chief).

MUKULA-MUSHTI connotes "that which is to be done"; wife, and marriage.

MUKULA : (variation) means the bud and indicates the "end."

MUDRA-PALLAVA helps to connote the 'hard device.'

MUSHTI (variation) indicates destruction.

PALLAVA-MUSHTI is used in indicating 'the hand.'

PATAKANJALI as the name indicates, is the combination of two hands in *Pataka* and in *Anjali* and represents the usage of play or pastime.

PATAKA-HAMSAPAKSHA stands to represent Brahma, the Lord of Creation.

PATAKA-KARTARIMUKHA when used indicates 'the prince.'

PATAKA-KATAKA is used to indicate the 'residence' and the 'cow.'

PATAKA-MUSHTI represents killing and hindrance.

PATAKA-MUKULAM stands to represent the heroes of *Ramayanam* viz., Sugriva, Bali, and Añgada.

PATAKA-KARTARIMUKHA represents the town, and Ravana, the King of Lanka (in *Ramayanam*).

SIKHARA (variation) meaning the peak, indicates 'Garuda', the bird of *Ramayanam*.

SIKHARA-MUSHTI is used in indicating Indra, the God of Devas (celestial beings).

SIKHARA-ANJALI represents Sri Vatsa (the mole on the breast of Lord Vishnu).

SIKHARA-HAMSAPAKSHA indicates "The middle" (course).

SUCHIMUKHA-ANJALI is used to connote the "picture."

VARDHAMANA-ANJALI : stands to indicate precious stones.

VARDHAMANA-HAMSAPAKSHA indicates the 'nectar.'

VARDHAMANA-HAMSASYA is used in indicating the nether lip.

It will be evident from the above description that different *mudras* connote one or more than one object. The exhibition of each object by means of hand poses, therefore, presupposes their usage in different ways. Unless the usages of these *mudras* are learnt from an expert and a skilled teacher, they cannot be correctly interpreted while dancing. The scope of this book, and in fact, of all books which might attempt to allude their usages, is limited to this extent (of their descrip-

tion only).

The use of all the *Hastas* (i.e., *Mudras*), according to Bharatha is guided by *Rasa* and *Bhava* (sentiments and emotions) and *Akruti* (nature). This characteristic or nature has twenty different forms, like exuberant (*utkarsha*) receiving (*Parigraha*), etc.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the chapter on "Symbolism and Gesture," p. 56.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AESTHETIC SENTIMENTS AND EMOTIONS IN KATHAKALI

Each dance gesture is accompanied with some *Rasa* (aesthetic sentiment) and is performed under certain *Bhava* (aesthetic emotion). *Rasas* may be explained in simple terms as the aesthetic outcome of moods in a relishably enjoyable form, while *Bhavas* are accessory moods of *Rasas*. According to Bharatha, there are eight types of *Rasas* to which he has mentioned in his *Natya Sastra*, Chapter VI and verse 15. But Abhinavagupta, the great scholar of the art of Hindu dancing and commentator of Bharatha, gives us nine *Rasas*. His view has also been incorporated and supported by Sarangdev in his *Sangit Ratnakar*. The ninth *Rasa* is termed as *Santa* (tranquil).

A careful investigation in the need of *Santa Rasa* shows that in all lively acting and dancing it has no place. *Santa* is peaceful, devotional,



and a sentiment which expresses dissociation with the worldly activities. This has rarely a place in dancing. But the Kathakali school of dancing has kept this alive. It exhibits it by contracting the eyes and holding them up with the chin, while the face and the neck are lowered and kept hanging. It has also given a scientific treatment to *Rasas* in its dance compositions. The eight varieties of sentiments mentioned in Sanskrit works are as follows :

*Sringara* (Erotic), *Hasya* (Comic), *Karuna* (Pathetic), *Raudra* (Furious), *Bhayanaka* (Terrible), *Veera* (Heroic), *Vibhatsa* (Disgustful) and *Adbhuta* (Marvellous).

**SRINGARA :** reflects feelings associated with sex. It originally lies at the very root of the creation—the creation of the strong and the weak sexes. Erotic sentiments are expressed by the movement of the eye-brows, eyes, lips and cheeks accompanied with a fascinating pose of the hand. It is the guiding *Rasa* of the *lasya* (type of dancing)



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



—a dance with erotic movements performed by females.

HASYA : is used in expressing laughable gestures to ridicule or contempt some character. It is exhibited by curving the eye-brows and shrinking the eyes. The neck and head are also shaken in a jerking manner.

KARUNA : is used to express pathos. It is represented by raising upwards to a corner the pupils of the eyes and keeping the hands in worship pose—*i.e.*, both hands in *Añjali*.

*Soka* or the sense of grief is classified in *Karuna*. It is, in fact, a variant of the pathos. When the eyes are contracted and the lips are lowered and intermittently quivered, it is *Soka Bhava*.

RAUDRA : furious or wrathful. It is an expression of excessive anger combined with ferocity. The eyes are open wide and the eye-balls are held in the middle with a fiery and piercing look. The

cheeks throb while the teeth rub each other.

**BHAYANAKA :** means terrible. It is represented by constantly moving the eye-balls on the sides, while keeping the eyes wide open. The head and neck are jerked, while both the hands are folded and placed on the breast.

**VEERA :** The heroic deed, valour and such other sentiments are expressed through this *Rasa*. The eyes are wide open and eye-brows raised the neck and face are held erect.

**VIBHATSA :** Disgustful scenes arouse the sense of grotesqueness. In this the facial expression undergoes a peculiar change. The eyes and eye-brows are contracted, hands extended—palm facing the audience, and the breast is held sunken a little.

**ADBHUTA :** exhibits the sense of wonder. It is shown by the quivering of the eye-brows accompanied with the nodding

of the neck and head. The eyes are adjusted in accordance with these movements, and the lips are thrown out a little.

*Bhavas* help *Rasas* in completing the "sense" of an "action" performed during the course of a dance movement. Thus the particular sentiment to be produced is guided by aesthetic emotions or feelings. The production of *Bhavas* is through two agencies, *viz.*, *Sharira* (body) and *Mana* (brain). The exhibition of feelings through these two agencies are, therefore, classified as *Sattvika* (i.e., feelings associated with the physical life of man like perspiration), *Manasik* (*viz.*, those emotions which arise out of the feelings produced in the process of some action of the brain, like madness), and, *Sharirik*, feelings which concern the body in action, like the raising of a stone.

Owing to physical manifestations in the actions of *Sattvika Bhava*, it is intimately related with *Sharirik Bhava*. Actions are performed by the movement of limbs and the result of this movement exhibits a certain emotion which is

termed as *Sattvika*. The cause of "motionlessness" for instance, is the immovability or the stationary condition of the limbs. "Immovability" is the *Sharirik Bhava*, while "motionlessness" is the *Sattvika Bhava*.

A stone is lifted. The action is *Sharirik*, but a question arises: Why the stone was lifted? Acting depicts that owing to fury the actor lifted the stone. Here "fury" is associated with "anger." It is a case of *Raudra Rasa*. The stone is thrown, and while doing so the man trembles. The actions of "lifting" and "throwing" are examples of *Sharirik Bhava* while "trembling" (the result of throwing) is *Sattvika Bhava*.

*Sattvika Bhava* has been classified as below :—

*Stambha* (motionless). *Sweda* (perspiration or sweat). *Romanch* (horripilation). *Swara-Bhanga* (coarseness in voice or voice beyond tune or pitch). *Kampa* (tremble). *Vavarnya* (sentimental change of the colour of the face). *Rudrana* (shedding of tears). *Pralaya* (destruction), and

*Yamaii* (yawn).

The brain commands the performance of an action. What the action was? and how it was determined? are the questions associated with it (the "brain") hence the *Manasik Bhava*. The *Isthai Bhava* (or the principal emotion) and *Vyabbichari Bhava* (the accessory mood of the *Isthai Bhava*) together produce the *Manasik Bhava*. The cause of the principal emotion is termed as *Vibhava* and the action performed as the result of the principal emotion is technically known as *Anubhava*.

Let me illustrate the above treatment of *Rasas* and *Bhavas* through an episode from the *Mahabharata*.

Kauravas (the opponents of Pandavas) killed Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun. On hearing this, Arjun was angry and his eyes were blood-red and arms fluttered. In the meantime Jaidratha kicked Abhimanyu who was lying unconscious in the battle-field. Arjun felt this and the flame of his anger out-burst.

In the above piece of the illustration, the



principal emotion is "anger" (*Krodha*) of Arjun (hence, *Isthai Bhava*); the cause of this anger, *i.e.*, determinant, is the murder of Abhimanyu (a case of *Vibhava*); the "action" of anger is the reddening of Arjun's eyes and his preparation for war—hence *Anubhava*, and, finally, the accessory mood of the principal emotion, "anger," is the degraded action of Jaidratha to kick the unconscious Abhimanyu—it is *Sanchari* or *Vyabbichari Bhava*. The combination of these four *bhavas* produce *Raudra Rasa*—since "fury" is associated with "anger."

It would be seen that it is the principal emotion which suggests a particular type of *Rasa*. *Isthai Bhava* is the "beginning" of, or the first stage to achieve, some aesthetics, while *Rasa* is the final form of the aesthetics achieved. Hence, each form of *Isthai Bhava* has an equivalent *Rasa*, as will be seen from the table appended on the next page :

## “ISTHAI BHAVA”

(Principal Emotion)

## “RASA”

(Sentiment).

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Rati</i> (love).        | 1. <i>Sringar</i> (erotic).      |
| 2. <i>Hasya</i> (mirth).      | 2. <i>Hasya</i> (comic).         |
| 3. <i>Soka</i> (sorrow).      | 3. <i>Karuna</i> (pathetic).     |
| 4. <i>Krodha</i> (anger).     | 4. <i>Raudra</i> (furious).      |
| 5. <i>Utsaha</i> (courage).   | 5. <i>Veera</i> (heroic).        |
| 6. <i>Bhaya</i> (fear).       | 6. <i>Bhayanak</i> (terrible).   |
| 7. <i>Jugupsa</i> (aversion). | 7. <i>Vibhatsa</i> (disgustful). |
| 8. <i>Ascharya</i> (wonder).  | 8. <i>Adbhuta</i> (marvellous).  |
| 9. <i>Shama</i> (quiet).      | 9. <i>Santa</i> (tranquil).      |

*Vibhava* is that determining factor of human feelings which gives a form to the *Isthai Bhava*. It is of two types, *viz.*, *Allamban*, *i.e.*, the principal factor, and *Uddipana* the accessory factor of *Allamban*. In *Sringar Rasa*, for instance, the principal factor is *Naika* or *Nayak* (wife or husband) and the accessory factor of *Allamban* is *Aikantavasa* (loneliness) and *Cādani* (moon-light). *Uddipana* has four characteristics, *viz.*, *Guna* (quality), *Cēsta* (desire), *Allankar* (costume) and *Tatasta* (nature's limitations).

The *Guna* of *Nayak* and *Naika*, the *Allamban Vibhava* of *Sringar Rasa* is their youth, radiance and character; the *Cēsta* is their desire to enjoy the honey-moon; the *Allankar* is their costumes, ornaments, etc.; and the *Tatasta* is the full-moon, gentle breeze, etc.

Mention has also been made in old Sanskrit texts of the natural (or *Swabhavika*) emotions of man. These natural feelings are thirty-three in number and are associated with the natural sequences and consequences of the state of mind or body ranging from the birth to the death of the living creature.

*Smriti* (remembrance), *Allasya* (laziness), *Sanka* (doubt), *Cinta* (anxiety or care), *Srama* (effort or labour), *Glani* (self-reproach), *Nidra* (drowsiness), *Moha* (attachment), *Mada* (rapture or ecstasy), *Nirveda* (desperate), *Asuya* (detachment), *Denya* (generosity), *Jadata* (obstinacy), *Drati* (forbearance), *Vrida* (progress), *Garwa* (pride), *Vikbada* (gloom), *Autsukya* (curiosity), *Avega* (hurry), *Harsba* (pleasure), *Capalta* (suppleness), *Apsmara* (fits), *Supti* (sleep), *Vivodha* (knowledge), *Vitarka* (logic or

counter discussion), *Amarsha* (anger), *Avabitha* (rivalry), *Mati* (opinion), *Ugrata* (rapidity), *Unmada* (mental derangement), *Trasna* (thirst), *Vyadhi* (trouble or malady), *Marana* (death), are the thirty-three natural feelings of man.

These “feelings” or “emotions” are called “natural” because they are intimately entwined with the aesthetic unconscious or voluntary changes in a man or woman occurring as a result of his or her behaviour in the usual phase of life. In the ordinary course of the day, man experiences all these, or a part of these, emotions in the satisfaction of some of his desires, or, as a result of some accident or happening.

In pantomime there is, thus, a harmonious blending of these various *Bhavas* to form *Rasas* in representing a meaningful “action” or movement. The dancer absorbs himself in the manifestation and representation of the character in whose disguise he is, to bring to life a “real” thought of man’s imagination of the Infinite—of the Self beyond the self—through a process mimetic in its nature, but powerful in its “speech.”

## CHAPTER IX

### THE COSTUME AND MAKE-UP

In Kathakali the costume and make-up have their own artistical representation. High skill and exactness have been achieved by some persons whose occupation is the "making up" of the actors. Though these are old fashioned and queer, yet they are impressive and imperative for every actor, because they enhance the beauty and dignity. Strong Malayalam influence is exerted in the embellishment of the actors, but some types of headgears and other garments together with some facial make-ups seem to have been influenced by Tibetan (Lama Devil Dancers') culture. Some critics observe that there appears to be a decided Mohammadan influence, especially in the dress and make-up of the female characters who, in several respects, resemble Moplah women of Malabar.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, it is indis-

<sup>1</sup> R. Vasudeva Poduval, Director of Archaeology, Travancore, in "The Art of Kathakali," p. 15.

putable that the greater part of the dress and make-up is suggested by the old mural paintings in the temples of Malabar, and also by the customs and traditions of the indigenous folk dances.

A legend is famous that the Raja of Kottarakkara, when conceived the characters, saw sea-nymphs from whom he copied the "form." It is this form which is represented in the Kathakali female actors.

An all-round improvement has been made by the ingenuity of two Nambudiri Brahmins: Kaplingat and Kallatikote, in the original painted masks of the areca sheath. These two scholars are responsible for the perfection of the art of Kathakali dance-drama.

There are more than eighty knots tied in the process of dressing. Mostly five colours, *viz.*, red, green, yellow, black and white, are used in make-ups which are standardised for the various types of characters.

The facial make-ups display a remarkable combination of *Sobha* (beauty), *Kanti* (loveliness), *Dipti* (radiance) and *Madhurya* (grace combined with sweetness). These are so design-

ed that facial expressions exhibit passions and sentiments adaptable to a particular character. The head-dress is heavy, elaborate and magnificent. The make-up of female characters is simple.

In the beginning costumes were imitations of those used in *Krisnattam* and masks used were without any head-dress. These (costumes and masks) portrayed the different characters of the *Ramayanam*.

New changes were introduced by the prince of Vettat Svarupam, who rejected several masks of "rough" types which overruled all the realistic expressions of the face by hiding them. A head-dress and some sort of a coat was put on. During these days musicians were the actors, but the addition of separate drummers and singers expanded the scope for the better expression of the self in the role of the not-self. Thus, this pantomimic art began to develop and to march towards perfection.

Actors wear several types of ornaments, like bangles, anklets, necklaces and armlets. Sages and *rishis* (saints) wear poor clothes, but other

characters put on voluminous skirts which in some respects resemble the skirts worn by the ballet dancers of the West. Fantastic garments are put on by actors representing the king, Gods or demons. The make-up and costume of Gods are so hideous that the symbolic colour and gorgeous cloth—the oversize garment—clearly reveal some superhuman figure. Gods wear circular carved wooden masks. Faces are painted with mask-like designs. Accentuated eye-brows and the *Chutti*, a white outline make an austere appearance of the actor. Different types of *Chutties* are used in the make-up of the characters. The *Chutti* is made of rice flour and lime and is put on the face of the actors by a laborious process. It extends from the temples to the chin. The complete process of the make-up takes two to three hours.

Kathakali characters are of three types according to their nature and virtues, *Sattvika* (virtuous), *Rajasika* (having vices), and *Tamsika* (terrifying and destructive).

1. Virtuous characters depict the acts of Gods, *Devatas* and *Apsaras* (divine and celestial beings)



and of such persons who have done virtuous acts in their lives.

2. Actors who play the role of Demons, evil doers and bad spirits are classified under *Rajasika* characters. Their make-up makes the appearance most formidable, fearful and terrifying. Long flowing tufts of thick black hair, long and pointed nails looking like claws, round and bulging eyes and protruding molars excite terror in the mind of the spectator and elevate the characters from their actual life to a demon.

3. Terrifying and destructive acts are exhibited by *Tamsika* characters. Such acts of Shiva which are classified as destructive or terrifying are *Tamsika* angry and revengeful acts.

The costumes and make-up are so appropriately divided among the above three types of characters that they help in alluding to a commoner the intricate aspects of this subtle art. Make-ups are of five varieties, *Minnuku*, *Pachcha*, *Kathi*, *Tadi*, and *Kari*.

*Minnuku* consists in the smoothening of the actor's face with a thick coating of a mixture of yellow and red pigments. Eyes and eye-lashes

are painted with black unguent and greasy collyrium. Sometimes the face is also decorated with white dots and some other paint. The white of the eye is turned blood-red by putting in a few young seeds of *Solanum Pubescens*.<sup>1</sup> The lips are also painted red, and the forehead is generally decorated with a caste mark. *Rishis* (sages), Brahmans and female characters make use of this make-up.

The second variety—principally called *Teppu*—has two divisions, *viz.*, the *Pachecha* and the *Kathi*. In the *Pachecha*, the front portion of the face is coloured deep green, while the *Chutti* runs over the lower jaw and touches the *Chuttinata*, the hem of the head-dress, on the forehead. The eyes and the eye-lashes are painted black and the lips red. This type of make-up is common in depicting the hero of the play and great and noble characters. Rama, Krishna, the five Pandavas, Indra, Nala, etc., appear in this guise.

<sup>1</sup> "The eyes of all the actors are always reddened for the stage by the young seed of *Solanum Pubescens*."

R. Vasudev Poduval, "The Art of Kathakali," p. 14.

The *Kathi* variety of *Teppu* is more elaborate than the *Pachcha*. In this two colours, red and green, are used. The former paint is put round the nose upto the forehead and over the eye-brows, while the latter is smeared all over the face. A *chutti* also runs around the nose and the forehead. These two white knots are technically termed *Chuttiyuvu*. Fierce characters who stand against the hero of the play, *i.e.*, *Pratinayak*, to term in the Kathakali language. *Asuras*, the enemies of the Gods, like Ravana, the Demon King, Keechaka, etc. have this type of make-up.

In the *Tadi* variety, red, white and black colours are used. *Veluppa Tadi* is the white type of *Tadi* and consists of a white beard and a fur coat with *Chuttiyuvus* on the tip of the nose and in the middle of the forehead. The face is painted with a mixture of yellow and red pigments. A thin coating of the *Chutti* runs round the eyes and meets the *Chuttinata*. It does not circle round the nose as in the case of *Pachcha*. The portions round the eyes, lips and chin are dyed with a black ointment. This

variety of *Tadi* is suitable for characters like Hanuman, the monkey sage and warrior.

The red variety of *Tadi*, known as *Chokanna Tadi*, uses a red beard and coat. The face is also painted red and the spaces round the eyes, lips and chin are dyed with a black unguent. Some bits of paper are stuck fluttering on either side of the nose and chin upto the eyes in *Chutti* to give an idea of moustaches. This adds considerably to the ferocity of the character. This variety is employed to represent the monkey king, Bali, Sugriva, Kalakeya, etc., also make use of the same dress.

The black type of *Tadi* consists in a black beard and a coat. The face is also coated with a black unguent. This *Karuppa Tadi* is used in representing the characters of Kali, *Kattalam* (the hunter) etc.

The last variety of make-up is the *Kan* where the face is painted black and the cheeks have a red crescent in the middle. When Shiva is depicted in the role of *Kirata* (the hunter) this type of make-up is employed.

Besides the above five types of make-ups,

another variety known as *Niram*, is used to introduce a mutilated and victimised character, like, Putana and Surpanakha, women with breasts or nose cut off. Similarly clowns are represented with a grotesque and comic appearance contrived with a combination of pigments of all colours.

The facial make-up is on the whole a highly developed realistic and remarkable art which consists in drawing with paints whose variegated colour helps in presenting an arresting appearance.

It would be of interest to note that the green paint is made out of a kind of orpiment powder mixed with cocoanut oil and a little indigo. This whole is ground over into a smooth oily paint to which a little *dammar* is mixed to give a glittering shape. The red paint is prepared from vermilion or red arsenic and rice flour and cocoanut oil. Similarly a combination of soot and cocoanut oil gives the black paint. The general conception in the classification of the colours is as follows :

<i>Green</i>	represents	<i>Sattvikta</i>	nature
<i>Red</i>	represents	<i>Rajasic</i>	nature
<i>Black</i>	represents	<i>Tamasic</i>	nature
<i>Yellow</i>	combines	<i>Sattvikta</i>	and
		<i>Rajasic</i>	qualities

In the matter of the personal embellishment of actors, it appears that considerable influence has been exerted from the description of the various images of Gods mentioned in ancient works on *Silpa Kala* (iconography). Various items of costumes are suggested by the facial make-up and the nature of the character. The head-dress has a peculiar and paramount importance in Kathakali costuming. It triumphantly demonstrates the intricate, elaborate and delightful carvings of the master craftsman. It is crown-like, with sets of gleaming glass pieces. Two types of head-dresses known as *Kesabharam Kiritam* and *Muti*, are common in Kathakali.

A head-dress which has a circular disc mounted at the back of the hollow cap-like cone is termed *Kesabharam Kiritam*. The disc is big in the case of vile and wicked characters, who have some regal dignity, like Ravana,

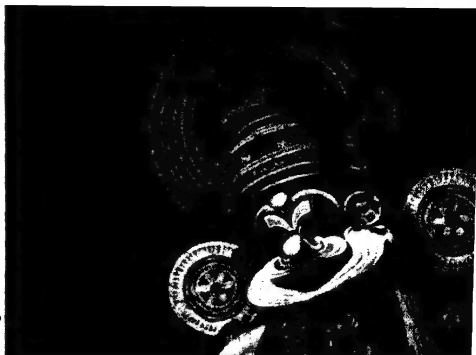
Sakuni etc., while a head-dress with a small disc is used among other characters.

The second type of the head-dress, *viz.*, the *Muti* resembles a conical dome corresponding to the coronet of hair of the sages, and is worn by characters representing divine agents and allies, like Narada, the wandering minstrel. The *Vatta Muti* has a protruding fringe added to the cone which then looks like an umbrella. It is worn when Hanuman is represented. The second type of *Muti*, known as *Kari Muti*, consists in a head-dress with open top, and is used for characters like Surpanakha, hunters, etc. In the case of Gods, like Rama and Krishna, the *Muti* is embellished with peacock feather on top. There is no spherical crown. The *Chuttinata* runs at the base of the head-dress on the forehead. This decorated hem harmoniously blends itself between the two artistic representations, the facial make-up and the edge of the head-gear.

A pair of round disc like ear-rings—*Kundalams*—is provided for the ears. They are beautifully coloured and gilded. A crest jewel and the *Chevikketu*, a small circular concave

KATHAKALI HEAD-DRESS  
AND MAKE-UP

Make-up of Ravana  
(Front View) *Tadi* variety  
with *Kesabharam Kiritam*  
head-dress



Make-up of Ravana  
(Side View) *Kathi* variety



Make-up of Hanuman  
*Veluppa Tadi* with *Vatta*  
*Muti* head-dress



[Photographs taken during  
actual performances By  
Sri Rajendra Shankar,  
U. I. C. C.]



over the breast, is used in decorating the body and is made of some fine embroidered cloth. Sainly characters wear garlands of various kinds and different shapes. The fore-arms are decorated with *Katakamas* and *Velases* or bangles—the latter being above the former. The necklace is made of glass beads and is worn by female characters who put on false breasts.

Costumes, though heavy, give to the actors a stately dignity, and make-ups, though cumbersome and highly artistical, decorate the characters with a realistic touch of the character displayed. Both help in enabling the actors to move with slow, graceful and measured gait and to impress the audience with their superfine mimetic art of exhibiting a drama.

## CHAPTER X

### KATHAKALI DANCE EXERCISES

Dances are of two types *viz.*, *Tandava* (manly) and *Lasya* (womanly). In *Tandava* dances the movements are upwards and downwards, while in *Lasya* dances the movements are side-ways. In both there is a poignancy and variety of appeal.

Kathakali dances carry with them the supreme symbol of the martial life of the people of Kerala. The verses which are acted are designated by a *Kalasa* (finishing steps). These *Kalasa*s consist of a graceful and vigorous circular movements and dexterous stamping, brilliant display and leaping of legs.

*Tandava* dances use vigorous and powerful foot-strokes and beats, exhibiting the sense of mostly *Vir Rasa* (heroic sentiment). On the other hand *Lasya* dances have supple and *Srngarik* (erotic) foot-steps. There is also a considerable difference between the musical tunes used in the former and the latter dances.

The adaptation of these two types of dances is from the *Natya Sastra* by the great sage, Bharatha. The *Tandava* is a dance associated with Shiva. It represents His *tamsic* (terrific) character in the role of Bhairav or Vira-Bhadra. But in its origin there is every reason to believe that originally the *Tandava* refers to the dances of Thandu who taught the various physical attitudes to Bharatha. These attitudes are technically termed as *Karanas*, *Angabaras* and *Rechitas*. A number of *Karanas* in successive display produce an *Angabara*, and two or more than two *Angabaras* when successively exhibited produce a *Rechita*. Bharatha deals with 108 *Karanas*, 32 *Angabaras*, and four *Rechitas*. These varieties of attitudes<sup>1</sup> are :

#### A. KARANAS

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Talapuspputa.    | 8. Mandla Swastika.  |
| 2. Vartita.         | 9. Nikutta.          |
| 3. Valitoruka.      | 10. Ardha Nikutta.   |
| 4. Apvidha.         | 11. Katichchinna.    |
| 5. Samnakha.        | 12. Ardha Recita.    |
| 6. Lina.            | 13. Vaksha Swastika. |
| 7. Swastika Recita. | 14. Unmatta.         |

<sup>1</sup> For a full discussion of this subject readers are recommended to study the "Bhartiya Nṛtya Kala," Vol. I (Hindi) by Gayanacharya and Rajkumar or "Thandava Lakshanam" (English) by Dr. Naidu and others.

- |                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 5. Prasta Swastika.        | 42. Vṛṣhckakuttana. |
| 16. Swastika.              | 43. Katibranti.     |
| 17. Dwika Swastika.        | 44. Latavṛshcka.    |
| 18. Allata.                | 45. Chinna.         |
| 19. Katisam.               | 46. Vṛṣcke Recita.  |
| 20. Akspta Recita.         | 47. Vṛshcka.        |
| 21. Viksptasiptaka.        | 48. Vyansita.       |
| 22. Ardha Swastika.        | 49. Parsvanikutta.  |
| 23. Añcitan.               | 50. Lallattilak.    |
| 24. Bujangtrasita.         | 51. Kranta.         |
| 25. Urdhva Janu.           | 52. Kuñcta.         |
| 26. Nikuncita.             | 53. Ckramandalam.   |
| 27. Matalli.               | 54. Uromandala.     |
| 28. Ardha Matalli.         | 55. Aksipta.        |
| 29. Recita Nikutta.        | 56. Talavilesita.   |
| 30. Padapavidhakam.        | 57. Argela.         |
| 31. Valita.                | 58. Vikshipta.      |
| 32. Gurnita.               | 59. Avṛtta.         |
| 33. Lalita.                | 60. Dollapada.      |
| 34. Dandpaksha.            | 61. Vivṛtta.        |
| 35. Bhujangtrasta Recitam. | 62. Vinivṛtta.      |
| 36. Nupur.                 | 63. Parakwakraṇt.   |
| 37. Vaishaka Recitam.      | 64. Nishumbhita.    |
| 38. Bramaram.              | 65. Vidubhdranta.   |
| 39. Catura.                | 66. Atikranti.      |
| 40. Bhujangañcita.         | 67. Vivartita.      |
| 41. Danda Recita.          | 68. Gajakridita.    |

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 69. Talasansafotita. | 89. Sihanvikridita.   |
| 70. Garudapluta.     | 90. Sihankarsita.     |
| 71. Ganda Suchi.     | 91. Udvrttan.         |
| 72. Parivrtta.       | 92. Upasrta.          |
| 73. Samuddishta.     | 93. Talasanghattita.  |
| 74. Gradhavalina.    | 94. Janitan.          |
| 75. Sannata.         | 95. Avahittha.        |
| 76. Suchi.           | 96. Nivesha.          |
| 77. Ardha Suchi.     | 97. Ilakakridata.     |
| 78. Suchividhan.     | 98. Urudvt-tan.       |
| 79. Apakranti.       | 99. Madaskhalits.     |
| 80. Mayura Lalita.   | 100. Vishnukranta.    |
| 81. Sarpita.         | 101. Sambrhanta.      |
| 82. Dandpada.        | 102. Vishkambha.      |
| 83. Harinapluta.     | 103. Udhattita.       |
| 84. Prendkholita.    | 104. Vrashbhakridita. |
| 85. Nitamba.         | 105. Lolita.          |
| 86. Iskalita.        | 106. Nagapsarpita.    |
| 87. Karihasta.       | 107. Saktasya.        |
| 88. Prasarpita.      | 108. Gangavatarana.   |

## B. ANGAHARAS

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Isthara Hasta. | 6. Udhattita.         |
| 2. Paryastaka.    | 7. Vishkamba.         |
| 3. Suci Vidha.    | 8. Vishkambhapasrata. |
| 4. Apavidha.      | 9. Aparajita.         |
| 5. Akshipta.      | 10. Mattakrida.       |

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 11. Swastika Recita.    | 22. Alataka.         |
| 12. Pasehwa Swastika.   | 23. Parashwacheda.   |
| 13. Vrashcika.          | 24. Viddubhdranta.   |
| 14. Bhramara.           | 25. Udavratta.       |
| 15. Mattskhalita.       | 26. Allira.          |
| 16. Mada Vilasita.      | 27. Recita.          |
| 17. Parivaratta Recita. | 28. Achurita.        |
| 18. Vaishakha Recita.   | 29. Akshipta Recita. |
| 19. Paravṛtta.          | 30. Sambhranta.      |
| 20. Gati Mandala.       | 31. Apasarpa.        |
| 21. Parichinna.         | 32. Ardha Nikutta.   |

### C. RECHITAS

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Pada Rechita. | 3. Kara Rechita.   |
| 2. Kati Rechita. | 4. Kantha Rechita. |

While adopting these attitudes in Kathakali, modifications had been made according to the conditions in which they were preserved in Kerala. The principal root being the same, they have been adapted with changes in response to the nature of the people of Kerala and the adaptability in the dance-drama. Several of the gestures are unique in themselves and produce enjoyable and laughable motions.

In the movement of arms and fingers of a dancer, the images of Malayalam icons<sup>1</sup> and their ethos are so finely brought out that these, combined with a thin attitude of the mind of the character displayed, are expressed in a highly formulised and cultured gesture language.

<sup>1</sup> Malayalam icons are decorated with the following ornaments :

- (i) *Kati-bandha* (waist band);
- (ii) *Kiritam* for *Vaisnavite* images;
- (iii) *Karanda Minkuta* for female deities;
- (iv) *Jata-Mukuta* for *Saivite* figures; and
- (v) *Prabha-Torana* (Halo of radiance).

In all big temples of Kerala, images of many gods are set up with a principal one or a president deity in stone or metal. An image of *Parvat* or *Bhagvati* also accompanies with these.

The Kerala art has many dramatic conceptions inspired by *Puranic* legends and its wealth of imagery has afforded endless material for a study of figures in action and movement.

The three characters of sculptural images found in Travancore are *Sattvika*, *Rajasik* and *Tamasik*.

- (i) *Sattvika* images are of the gods sitting in meditation in the posture of a *Yogin* with hands turned in a way to express a grant of boon or blessings to a votary. He is surrounded by *Indra* and other Gods praying and worshipping Him (*Brahma*).
- (ii) *Rajasik* images are of *Vishnu*. He is shown seated on a *Vahvan* or vehicle adorned with various ornaments. His hands hold weapons, as well as, grant boon or blessing.
- (iii) *Tamasik* images look terrific and fearful. They are several armed figures fighting and destroying de-



KARTIKEYYA  
( Uday Shankar )

[ *Courtesy* : Uday Shankar, Indian Culture Centre ]



## PARVATAM

(N.B.—Arrows show the direction of arms and dots the position of the eye-glance.)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

There are six fundamental poses used in the Kathakali. They are as follows:—

- (i) *Lata Hasta*, i.e., the hand hanging down;
- (ii) *Nidrit Hasta*, the sleeping hand;
- (iii) *Kati Hasta*, i.e., the hand touching the hip;
- (iv) *Dhanurdhari Hasta*, viz., the hand holding a bow;
- (v) *Abingana Hasta*, that is, an embracing hand; and,
- (vi) *Gaja Hand*, viz., the hand resembling the proboscis of an elephant.

Besides these, there are eight poses used in it (Kathakali) based on *mudras* or actions of fingers. They are:

- (i) *Katak Hasta*,
- (ii) *Kartari Hasta*,
- (iii) *Simhakarna Hasta*,
- (iv) *Patak Hasta*,
- (v) *Tri-Patak Hasta*,
- (vi) *Suchi Hasta*,
- (vii) *Ardhachandra Hasta*, and
- (viii) *Gyana Hasta*.

mons. Shiva and Durga are depicted in this character.

The type of female figures most common in Travancore sculpture is that of a young matron with her breasts like a pair of golden gourds and hips like the swell of a river bank.

These different fundamental poses assist the dancer to bring out various physical attitudes.

The entire dance consists in the following :

- (i) Acting
- (ii) Costuming
- (iii) Make-up
- (iv) *Hastas' Prayog* (the use of Hand Poses)
- (v) Physical Attitudes
- (vi) Gesticulation
- (vii) Foot-strokes
- (viii) Stretching and waving of arms
- (ix) Marching.

When these nine aspects of the dancer's behaviour are exhibited, a small piece of dance is performed. It has considerable artistic and technical grace. Each object is expressed in a number of ways—sometimes with *Angavikshepa* (movement of the limbs), somewhere by using highly specialised gestural code, and somewhere by gesticulation only. Every gesture is a meaningful art of great symbolic purpose.

Supposing a dancer has to show a high mountain (*Parvatam*). While beginning his

process, he will, in the first place, show what the mountain is like. His gestures will be like the one shown in Fig. 1. Fig. 3 shows the height of mountain ("so high it is"). A little of marching is done in between the intervals of one gesture to another. The vastness of the mountain is evident from Figs. 4 and 5. Adaptable *Mudras* and sentiments will be used.

I now attempt to analyse the dance-drama of the "Rhythm of Life" staged by Sri Uday Shankar, the greatest exponent of Indian dancing of this century, in 1940. The story runs as follows :

A young man with experience of the world, crushed by the machinery of modern civilisation and victimised by the ravages of vested interest, returns to his village during a festival. In spite of the merriment and dances, real life seems so miserable to him that he finds no happiness. He lies down and analyses the whole situation as the music and song continue in the distance. "I have seen the life in big towns," he muses, "splendour, luxury and meanness, while here the real people of the country, the honest villagers crawl in misery

and squalor. For generations they have been suppressed, deceived and tyrannised but do not realise it. My feelings, love and goodwill are ignored, when for years I have planned to save them, to march with them to demand their rights." He is deeply stirred and thinks of the *sloka* as he gradually dozes to sleep :

*Vadhyam dakshadhwara dwanso dvega tyagaya  
shambhuna*

*Cakre kautukato nando swati tunburu naradah:*

Shiva appears in a terrible mood after slaying Daksha, and creates the sacred drum and other instruments to relieve himself of the wrath that boils inside of him. *Apsaras*, heavenly nymphs, come to get Shiva's blessing and dance around the dreamer. As they disappear, sacred warriors enter with naked swords as if they were about to slay him. Upon their exit, a young woman appears with all her allure, charm and voluptuousness. He is attracted by her and begins to dance with her in the hope of possessing her. She vanishes as he holds her in his arms. He finds

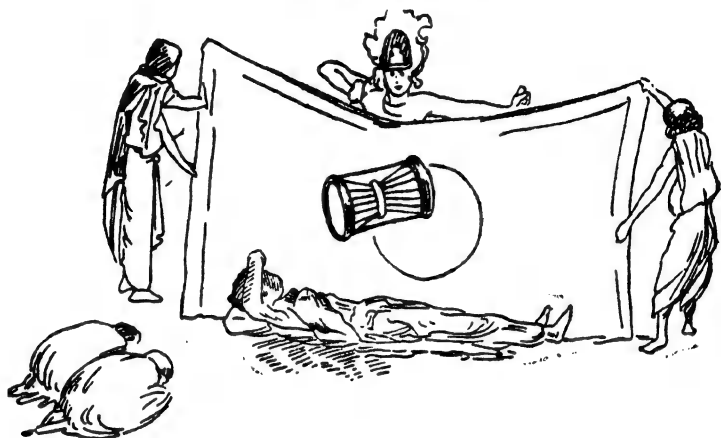
himself among peasants and dances with them. But all leave him and he is alone. The atmosphere is tense with the premonition of coming evil. The young landlord approaches and demands money of him. He has nothing to give him. The landlord whips him mercilessly till he is wounded and bleeding. Suddenly the villagers appear and request him to take the national flag and march at their head to the town to see the super-man who has always identified himself with the peasants and is ready to give him life for truth and his country. But death and starvation are stalking them. He does not realise that he is face to face with the super-man, and sighs and sobs with the delight of seeing him with pain and agony of heart he complains of all the age old suffering of the peasants at the hands of their exploiters. The super-man consoles him and promises to alleviate the suffering of the peasants. He sees the awakening of women, their courage and sacrifice in the political struggle. While many are sincere, in others he notices hypocrisy, forced amiability and falseness, but he

believes that the patriots are arriving to save the land. The super-man introduces him to these well-wishers of the country who assure him of all support. As soon as the super-man leaves, there is again chaos all around; jealousy, selfishness, intrigue, orthodoxy, gossip and servility become rampant. He looks in vain for help. The crowd becomes monstrous and he feels himself being overwhelmed by the uncertainties which confront him. He wakes up in a daze. The distant song and music still continue leaving him with the unsolved problem but within himself a new hope vanquishes companion.

This is an example of a pantomimic dance-drama. Though in actual staging Mr. Uday Shankar did not utilize heavy costumes and the subtle make-up of the Kathakali, yet the entire plot was constructed on its principles supported by Bharatha's *Natya Sastra* and the popular concept.

Accompanying illustrations analyse the entire story :

## RHYTHM OF LIFE

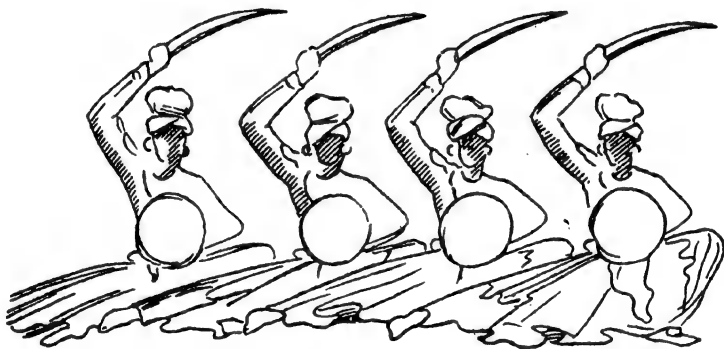


"He is deeply stirred and gradually dozes to sleep.  
Shiva appears in a terrible mood."



"Apsaras dance around the dreamer."





"Sacred warriors enter."



"He is attracted by her...But all leave him...The atmosphere is tense."



**"The landlord whips him mercilessly."**



"Villagers appear and request him to take the national flag."



“But death and starvation are stalking them...He sees the awakening of women...There is chaos again!”

In a hundred per cent Kathakali play the costume and make-up have an essential utility. Stories for its plays are adapted from the *Kathakali* by Virakerala Varma, the Raja of Kottarakkara. No attempt in a book-form can lucidate the practical aspect of this dance-drama, and an interested reader is advised to witness a Kathakali performance in Travancore during October to November when several festivals and *utsavams* are celebrated.

## CHAPTER XI

### TALAS (TIME MEASURES) USED IN KATHAKALI

Everything seeks its own level. It overflows when it surpasses its limit. Similarly every note (voice, or sound) is not musical. If it is an unbalanced weighted stroke of sound, it is unmusical and shall alarm a man, but a balanced weighted sound is harmonious and musical. *Tala* marks the rhythm of music—a rhythm that tends sound to be harmonious and divisible into a time. Every gesture has to be rhythmical for its graceful manifestation of the *purpose* of dance. The great scholar on the art of *Sangitha* says :

The greatness of *tala* (or time measures) depends upon giving definite rhythmical time divisions of compositions and then to indicate the various beats (strokes) and the waved-beat (*i.e.*, where the division falls but no beat is given—a division which is technically known

a *Khalli*). It (*tala*) is an essential component of *Githa* (vocal), *Vadya* (instrumental), and *Nṛtya* (pantomime).<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, we can say that the purpose of *tala* is to give time beats.<sup>2</sup> A musical or a dance composition without time divisions in its rhythm is no composition as such.

In ancient Sanskrit works mention of *tala* is made according to the metrical divisions and not as it is during these days, *i.e.*, divisions for the purpose of "stroke-giving." In *tala* measures *Sangitha Ratnakar* mentions the use of the terms *Plupta*, *Guru*, *Laghuviram*, *Laghu*, *Drutaviram*, and *Drut*.

Plupta	consists of	12	intervals
Guru	"	8	"
Laghuviram	"	5	"
Laghu	"	4	"
Drutviram	"	3	"
Drut	"	2	"

<sup>1</sup> Talastala pratisthayamitighatirghjsmratah  
Githan vadhyam tatha nrtyan yatastaleh pratishthitim.  
—KALLINATH

<sup>2</sup> Talah kala Kriyamanam. PANDIT AMARSINGH



This type of division is like the division of poetry (*i.e.*, prosodical divisions). All *talas* have originated according to the above intervals, *e.g.*, *Nishankbateentala* has 44 intervals (*matras*) with two *Pluṭtas* (to be indicated with the mark §), two *Gurus* (indicated with S) and one *Laghu* (indicated as I). Thus, *Nishankbateentala* will appear as :

§ § S S I

*Mishravarnatala* has 71 *matras* with *Drutas* (indicated as O), *Drutirams* (indicated as O''), *Pluṭta*, *Guru* and *Laghu*. Thus it would appear as :

O O O O'' O O O O'' O O O O'' § S O O S I S

All compositions had to be set on this principle of *Guru*, *Laghu*, etc.

The origin of these *tala* "natures" seems to have been from the ups and downs of the thoughts of the hermits who in the process of their meditation experienced slow, steady or swift flow of the screens of God realisation. *Pluṭta*, as the name implies, indicates the retention of *Kal* (time) in the rhythm of any flow, whether upwards or downwards. It is further suggested by an ancient work that *tala* derives its existence from the voice

of birds. *Nilakantha* (blue bird) emits one *matra* note; crow gives two *matras* notes, peacock three *matras*; reptile one-half *matra*. The following measurements are also given:

2 Anus	equal to	1 Drut
2 Druts	„	1 Laghu
2 Laghus	„	1 Guru
3 Gurus	„	1 Plupta
10 Pluptas	„	1 Pal

One *Plupta* being of three *matras*, ten *pluptas* equal to thirty *matras*, that is to say one *Pal* equals to thirty *Matras*. This follows that a full weight note of one *Pal* has a retention of 24 seconds in the English standard time, *i.e.*, one standard unit of *Kal* (time) will finish on the expiry of the 24th second. This is a correct measure.

Sarangdev maintains that *talas* have two divisions, *viz.*, *Margi* variety of *talas* and *Desi* variety of *talas*. In the former division he classifies the following *talas* :

*Cancatputa, Sampakwesteka, Sutpitaputraka*  
and *Cacpura*.

He also mentioned the hundred and twenty

*Desi* varieties prevalent during his time. These *talas* are not now practised.

Mastery over rhythm was achieved during the time of Bharatha, Sarangdev and other ancient Sanskrit authors, because besides the above divisions of *talas* into times of *Guru*, *Laghu*, etc., mention is also made of the minutest sub-divisions of a metrical composition. *Tala* classification could be made according to *laya* (rhythm), i.e., *Drut*, *Madhya*, or *Bilambat layas*. According to interval divisions these may be termed as Moderato or Allegro, Moderato or Allegretto, and Moderately Slow or Andate (e.g., 16 Crotchets in 4 bars).

The life blood of *Sangitha* is *tala* and the *Sum* (or the most prominent position of the bar with the heaviest weight) is the "soul" of *tala*. The various diversions—leaves and cuts—from the *Sum* are termed as *Ghatt*, *Anaghattas*, etc., but in the end every musician and dancer has to fall on the same "flow" of the *Sum*. The subtle sub-divisions of *Matras* or intervals, or the permutation of these into fractional measures of time are known as *Arhi*, *Kuarhi*, *Ta-tham*, *Tiya*, etc. These cuts are peculiar to Indian art of *Sangitha* and are its "fine-

ries" (so far as the *tala* aspect is concerned), because, without impairing the rhythmic flow of the time, the *laya* is exhibited in different ways. An actor who attains perfection in it (*laya*), is a true artist.

The rhythm of the creation of the universe, of the cosmic dance of Shiva and all such other dances was guided by the beat of the drum of Shiva. Either from a rhythmical composition, the *tala* is adjusted or within the limits of a particular *tala*, the composition is adjusted.<sup>1</sup> In every case a composition has *laya* (rhythm), *matra* (interval), *aghats* (strokes), *Sum* (the first most prominent stroke).

The *tala* measures of the north and the south differ, not in principle but in practice. Apparently they may seem to differ in principle from the modern practices of *talas*, but all are based upon the principles of *Sastras* mentioned above. In Kathakali generally five main varieties of *talas* are used. They consist of eight, ten, fourteen, seven or six intervals. The following are the chief and popular *talas* used therein :

<sup>1</sup> Kalah kriya parichinna tala shabdeh na bhadyateh.

*Adi* or *Chempata*, *Champa* or *Jumpa*, *Atanta* or *Ata*. *Tripata* or *Muriatanta*, and *Panchari* or *Roopaka*.

Their *swaroop* or description is as follows :

*Adi* : consists of eight intervals. It has three beats and two waves (*i.e.*, leaves). This whole in Western terminology may be said as eight crotchets in three bars.

*Champa* : has 10 intervals with three beats and one let off. This is 10 quavers in three bars.

The *tala* with 14 intervals and four strokes and two leaves is termed as *Atanta*.

*Tripata* consists of seven intervals with stroke divisions on the first, fourth, and sixth and leaves on the fifth and seventh.

*Panchari* tala has six intervals. Beats fall on the first and fifth interval, while the leave is given on the sixth interval. The above description can thus be illustrated :

<i>Adi</i>	..	O O O' / X / X	..	8 intervals.
( <i>Chempata</i> )		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8		
<i>Champa</i>	..	O O O O O O O / / X	10	„
( <i>Jumpa</i> )		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		

<i>Atanta</i>	..	/	O	O	O	O	/	O	O	O	O	/	X	/	X	
( <i>Ata</i> )			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
										..			..		14	intervals
<i>Tripata</i>	..	/	O	O	/	X	/	X				..	7		„	
( <i>Muriatanta</i> )			1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
<i>Panchari</i>	..	/	O	O	O	/	X		..			..	6		„	
( <i>Roopaka</i> )			1	2	3	4	5	6								

NOTE: / represents a beat of hand; O represents counting of fingers; X waving of the hand.

An actor during his course of training practises over these *talas* and when he has acquired perfection in *laya* (rhythm) he attempts to acquire mastery over the more difficult, subtle and intricate ones.

The *bols* or wordings of these *talas* are heavy, powerful and high sounding, unlike those used in the North. The *bols* are like: *thunga*, *karan*, *gir-gir*, *kurming*, *dharrang*, *dirak-ābirak*, etc. The wordings differ in their nature according to the sentiment to be expressed at a particular moment. Where heroic sentiment is to be expressed strong and powerful wordings are let out,

and if *Sṛṅgar Rasa* is to be displayed smooth and erotic steps are used.

Various types of drums are used. In the North *tabla*, *mṛdanga*, *pakhawaj*, etc., are the instruments for *tala* measures, while *Perikai*, *Padakam*, *Idakkai*, etc.,<sup>1</sup> are found for this purpose in the South. Some of the drums have one side covered with leather while others have both the sides covered up. In dance, different varieties of drums are used for different occasions (or "positions" in the dance).

From the above reading we gather that the subtlety of dramatic (as well as the musical) art consists in a well-balanced *behaviour* of *tala* in the exquisite exposition of the rhythm of the dancer. This rhythm does not merely mark time but space as well and it is not merely the foot stroke with which we are concerned but all the movements (and gestures) of the actor. Nature cannot dance till Shiva wills it; He beateth His drum and all pulsating Matter dance in Glory and in rhythm with the Eternal voice revolving and

<sup>1</sup> For full description, see Appendix B.

encircling the entire universe. He who cometh in it, dances in tune, harmony and rhythm of the Eternity.



## APPENDIX A

### KATHAKALI STAGE

The construction of the actual Kathakali stage is a small (or in some instances a big) platform covered by a shed. But whether a stage is small or big, the movements of the actor are affected not in the least, and herein lies his high technical skill to dance without impairing the quality. The front curtain is a thick and oblong piece of coloured cloth on which the image of God Shiva or Vishnu or of a lotus is drawn in the centre. Two people are responsible for stretching and contracting the curtain on either side when a character appears on or disappears from the stage. It is generally 5ft. long and 4ft. broad. Footlights or other lights for shade are secured by means of thick cotton wicks burning in coconut oil in a well-shaped bell-metal lamp put in the middle of the fore part of the stage at a height of four feet. The audience sits on mattings in front

of the stage. An indigenous invested wooden mortar (not a civilised stool) serves all furniture that a Kathakali stage requires, to serve as a seat or foot-rest when some characters have to proclaim how great they are by lifting and putting one of the feet on the seat.

## APPENDIX B

### MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS USED IN TRAVANCORE MUSIC

Kerala culture developed a variety of musical instruments. They were originally divided into three kinds, *viz.*, first, *Githanga* (vocal accompaniment), second, *Nrthanga* (dancing accompaniment) and, third, *Ubbayanga* (*i.e.*, instruments adaptable for both vocal and dancing). All musical instruments were collectively denoted by the term *Isaikkaruri* of which four kinds are distinguished, *viz.*, *Thorkaruri* made of leather, *Thulaikkaruri* provided with holes, *Narambukkaruvi*, *i.e.*, string instruments, and lastly, *Midattukkaruvi*, that is, throat instruments. Of these, the flute, commonly known in old Tamil as *Vankiyam* was one of the most important wind instruments. Mention is also made of the following flutes: *Kontaiyankulal*, *Ampalanthinkulal*, and *Mullaiyankulal*.

In primitive times, the *Yal* was the chief stringed instrument. There were different kinds of *Yals* with different number of strings, like *Periyal* consisting of 21 strings, *Makarayal* consisting of 19 strings, *Sakodayal*, consisting of 14 strings and *Senkottiyal* consisting of seven strings.

The leather instruments adaptable as accompaniments for any performance, according to the *Silappathikaram*, are as below :

1. *Perikai* .. A kind of kettle-drum.
2. *Padakam* .. Tom-Tom.
3. *Idakkai* .. A double-headed drum.
4. *Maddalam* .. A kind of drum.
5. *Udukkai* .. A hand drum like the  
hour-glass.
6. *Challikai* .. A kind of large drum.
7. *Karadikai* .. A kind of drum.
8. *Thimilai* .. A drum of fishermen.
9. *Kudamula* .. An earthenware drum.
10. *Thakkai* .. Tabour.
11. *Ganapparai* .. A kind of drum.
12. *Damarukam* .. A little drum.

- |     |                        |       |  |
|-----|------------------------|-------|--|
| 13. | <i>Thannumai</i>       | ..    | A kind of drum.  |
| 14. | <i>Thadari</i>         |       |  |
| 15. | <i>Anthari</i>         | ..    |  |
| 16. | <i>Mulavu</i>          | ..    | A drum in general.   |
| 17. | <i>Chandravalayam</i>  |       | A kind of drum.  |
| 18. | <i>Montbai</i>         | ..    | A drum open at an end.   |
| 19. | <i>Murasu</i>          | ..    | A variety of kettle drum.  |
| 20. | <i>Kan-vidu-thambu</i> |       | A kind of drum.  |
| 21. | <i>Nisalam</i>         | ..    | One headed drum.   |
| 22. | <i>Thudumai</i>        | ..    | A kind of drum.  |
| 23. | <i>Chiruparai</i>      | ..    | A small drum.  |
| 24. | <i>Adakkam</i>         | ..    | A kind of drum.  |
| 25. | <i>Thakunicham</i>     |       |  |
| 26. | <i>Viraleru</i>        |       |  |
| 27. | <i>Pakam</i>           |       |  |
| 28. | <i>Upankam</i>         |       |  |
| 29. | <i>Nalikai</i>         |       |  |
| 30. | <i>Parai</i>           | .. .. | A big drum.  |
| 31. | <i>Thuti</i>           | .. .. | A small drum tapering<br>from each end forming<br>a small neck in the<br>centre. |

Of the percussion instruments those that are

even now in use in Travancore are as follows :—

*Bheri, Damarukam, Mrdangam, Gajjali, Dolak, Thuti, Udukku, Chenta, Thimila, Idekka, Thakil, Ghata, Vadyam, Milavu, Murasu and Parai.*

The chief wind instruments used now are the *Nagaswaram, Nedumkulal, Kurumkulal, Murali, Pullankulal, Sruthi, Pampu Nagaswaram, Mukha Vina* and *Kompu*.

The important stringed instruments now used are *Nanthuni, Vina, Thamburu* and *Violin*, while *Sarangi, Swarabhith* and *Kottuvadyam* were in use in Swathi Thirunal Maharaja's time (*i.e.*, 1813-1847 A.D.) but subsequently fell into disuse.

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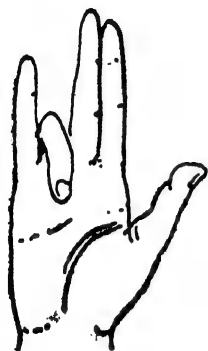
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## MUDRAS IN KATHAKALI



1. Pataka



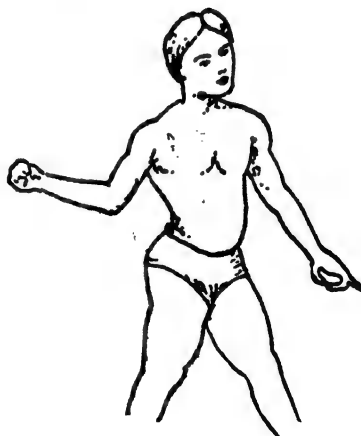
2. Tri-Pataka



3. Karttarimukham



4. Ardhachandram



5. Aralam



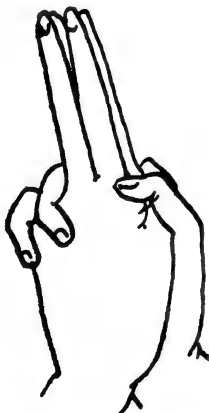
6. Sukatundam



7. Suchimukham



8. Mrigshirsham



9. Hamsasyam



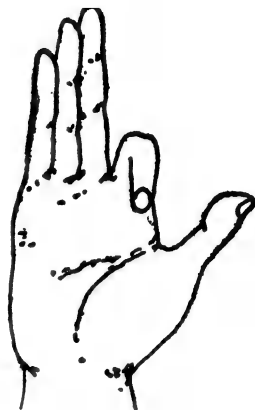
10. Mushti



11. Sikharam



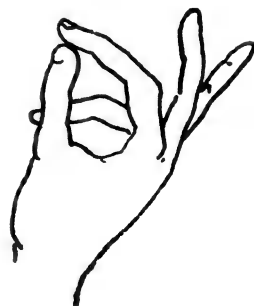
12. Kapittham



13. Bhoramaram



14. Hamsapaksham



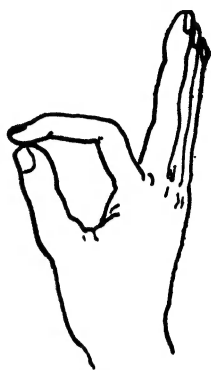
15. Mukuram



16. Sarpasirrasu



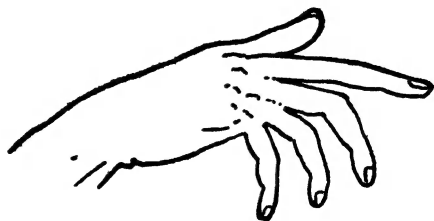
17. Mukulam



18. Mudra



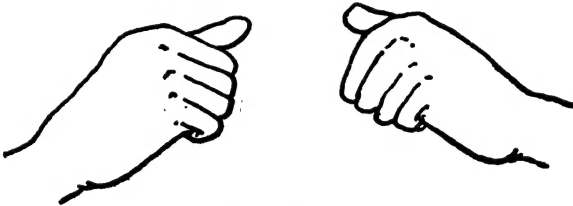
19. Katakamukham



20. Pallava



21. Katakam



22. Varddhamanam



23. Anjali



24. Urnanabham



